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Tuesday June 24 1997

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The Guardian

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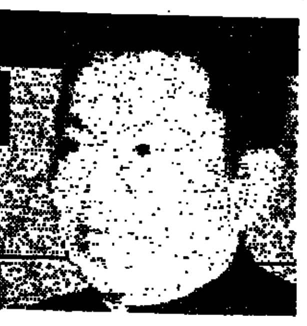
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,898

The last days of Pol Pot

The most evil man alive



G2 with European weather

Sport

First day at Wimbledon

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Education

The multimillion pound marriage

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Britannia sails into Hong Kong

The last hurrah for a symbol of Empire

Andrew Higgins on the final bon voyage

Changing order . . . Britannia enters Hong Kong harbour yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LONGSTREATH

LADEN with portraits of pre-divorce royalty, mementos of an empire lost and, on a noticeboard next to the laundry, a list of job opportunities for a soon-to-be-redundant crew, the royal yacht Britannia sailed into Hong Kong yesterday for the last hurrah of Pax Britannica.

It berthed alongside the Prince of Wales Barracks, overshadowed by the newest monument to Hong Kong's incoming power — the shimmering new skyscraper of CITIC Pacific, the colony's pre-eminent "red-chip" conglomerate and symbol of a changing economic and political order. On its mirrored glass facade hangs a taunting yellow banner with a huge red emblem: "Celebrate the Return."

Although 412ft long and judged worth an offer of £25 million from Michael Jackson, the Britannia seemed almost puny, its traditions of whispered commands and plimsolled feet to avoid disturbing royal ears a world away from the din and dynamism of Hong Kong.

On its last mission before being taken out of service in December, the vessel will be the centrepiece of Britain's final imperial retreat, conveying Prince Charles soon after midnight next Monday from the harbour seized and named after his great-great-great-grandmother, Victoria. The voyage to Hong Kong, with stopovers in 24 countries, has taken five months. Prince Charles will arrive by air to confer the colony's last knighthoods on Sunday, and will then hand sovereignty back to China on Monday.

Britain's seaborne exit from Hong Kong closes a cycle of history begun in 1841 when the Royal Navy seized the island at the urging of opium pushers. In preparation for what Britain hopes will be a departure more dignified than its arrival, a typed sheet of paper on the bridge gives the authorised response to well-wishers aboard other vessels: "Thank you for your loyal greetings ... *Bon voyage.*"

Also on board early on July 1 will be Governor Chris Patten and a retinue of friends and socialities invited by Prince Charles to share a three-day-journey to Manila — where they will find refuge from thousands of journalists massed in Hong Kong, and board planes back home. Escorting the Britannia will be three Hong Kong patrol craft to be sold off as part of the empire's going-out-of-business sale.

In a corridor below decks near the engine room grin Prince Andrew and Fergie. Prince Charles puts in an appearance as a gawky young man in naval uniform. Diana has been banished from public view. A royal drawing room stuffed with chintz chairs and regal knick-knacks appears modest in a city of flaunt-it-if-you've got it wealth where chandeliers drip from every hotel lobby.

The ghost of Michael Portillo, the former Defence Secretary buried by last month's Labour landslide, lingers in the confusion left behind by his decision to build a £60 million replacement for the Britannia.

"This was announced by a minister who no longer has a seat," Lieutenant Mark Pomeroy, the main machinery officer, explained curtly to a Chinese visitor. "There has been a change of government. We don't know where we stand now." Particularly anxious are a crew of 217 men. Resettlement Notices pinned to the wall invite applications from chefs and musicians.

Labour pledged in its *turn to page 2, column 3*

Extra troops to go in, page 7

Blair's final offer to Sinn Fein

Anglo-Irish deal on arms disposal

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE British and Irish Governments last night reached agreement over the decommissioning of illegally held paramilitary weaponry as Tony Blair prepared to unveil his final offer tomorrow for bringing Sinn Fein into talks on Northern Ireland's future.

The deal was struck between Mr Blair and his Irish counterpart John Bruton during a 20-minute meeting at the Earth summit in New York. But Mr Bruton, who has only three days left as taoiseach, annoyed the prime minister by revealing their agreement before Mr Blair has had the opportunity to brief Northern Ireland's political parties in advance of Wednesday's Commons statement.

A spokesman for Mr Blair, reacting to comments given by Mr Bruton to the Irish state broadcaster RTE immediately after the two leaders' meeting, stressed that details of the agreement had yet to be accepted by other parties to the talks, such as Sinn Fein.

Mr Bruton said the development should permit "a rapid forward movement" on talks about the future of Northern Ireland as all the clarification sought by Sinn Fein had now been provided.

After Government sources initially played down the claims, a spokesman for Mr Blair later confirmed he had reached agreement with Mr Bruton. But the spokesman stressed: "All that has been agreed is the basis of how we might be able to move forward [on decommissioning], but any suggestion that this is tied up with the various parties involved is premature."

The shape of the Anglo-Irish agreement on arms is likely to mimic that envisaged by President Clinton's special Irish envoy George Mitchell, who is now chairman of the Stormont talks. In a report published in January last year by the former senator it was suggested paramilitary organisations should begin decommissioning during all-party talks.

John Bruton: hoped for rapid movement on talks

John Major's government originally agreed with Unionists and wanted weapons to be handed over before substantive negotiations. Sinn Fein and the IRA said no arms would be surrendered until a political settlement had been agreed. Loyalists said they would not give up weapons until the IRA commenced.

The issue has deadlocked the Stormont talks since they began a year ago. Last weekend the Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said decommissioning had to be removed as a stumbling block.

Unionist politicians last night remained sceptical. The decommissioning issue dominated a series of meetings between the Northern Ireland political development minister Paul Murphy and local parties at Stormont yesterday. Afterwards Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble said he did not think the two governments had reached an agreed position which would enable them to put a paper containing recommendations when the talks meet in plenary session today.

He warned that if any agreement centred on Irish deputy prime minister Dick Spring's proposal of "kicking it into the long grass and forgetting about it", it would be unacceptable to Unionists.

While disclosing no details, Mr Bruton claimed all the clarification questions put by Sinn Fein had now been answered. He told RTE that the new position left Sinn Fein with the choice of taking the political road and rejecting violence, or pursuing their current "twin track" approach with the IRA.

Mr Bruton referred to the offer made by Britain to Sinn Fein just two days before last week's IRA murder of two RUC officers, opening the way for them to quickly join all-party talks in the event of a renewed IRA ceasefire.

He said the decommissioning agreement ought to remove the final roadblock for Sinn Fein, who were now left with no excuse but to move towards a ceasefire and enter the talks.

Leader comment, page 8

Prague Writers' Festival 1997

Texts for Nothing - Texty pro nic

The 7th Prague Writers' Festival presents a selection of fine authors from the Czech Republic and around the world. Meet them at the Franz Kafka Centre, Old Town Square, at 7pm from 24 to 28 June.

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Martin Vopěnka — Czech Republic
Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill — Ireland
Viola Fischerová — Czech Republic

Wednesday 25 June
André du Bouchet — France
Roland Jooris — Belgium
Vladimír Křivánek — Czech Republic
Giuseppe Conte — Italy

Thursday 26 June
Aharon Appelfeld — Israel
Zinovy Zinik — Russia
Jana Štroblová — Czech Republic
Raoul Schrott — Austria

Friday 27 June
Janice Galloway — Great Britain
Igor Pomerantsev — Russia
Elena Stefoi — Romania
Dimitris Nollas — Greece

Saturday 28 June
Julian Barnes — Great Britain
Hanna Krall — Poland
Michael March — USA
António Franco Alexandre — Portugal

The Prague Writers' Festival is dedicated to Samuel Beckett.

For further details, please contact the Festival Director, Michael March, Revoluční 28, 110 00 Prague 1. Mobile: + 420 602 371 478

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Rail firms face huge fines over inquiries 'collapse'

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

DRACONIAN fines could be imposed on the 25 train operating companies by the rail watchdog, for failing to provide the public with an adequate national rail inquiry service, which is on the point of collapse in some parts of Britain.

John Swift, the rail regulator, is to issue an ultimatum to the industry, warning it to improve its telephone inquiry service within a fortnight or face fines of several million pounds.

That would dramatically hit the share values of quoted companies such as Stagecoach, Sea Containers and National Express.

The move follows efforts by Mr Swift, encouraged by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, to come down hard on Railtrack, operator of the lines, signals and stations, over its failure to meet investment targets.

Rail customers have complained repeatedly about the deteriorating service on the information telephone line, dialled on 0345-484950. Many callers cannot get through, while staff face constant abuse because the lines are poorly resourced.

Mr Prescott accepts the privatised rail system is in place and cannot be materially changed. But with almost £2 billion of taxpayers' money going into it every year, he is determined to make sure it is more effectively regulated.

Under the regulator's guidelines, the telephone inquiry service is supposed to answer 90 per cent of all calls, and 95 per cent of these have to be answered in 30 seconds. But the companies are falling woefully short of these targets and the situation is worsening.

The penalties will be imposed on the Association of Train Operating Companies, representing the 25 companies, which include Stagecoach, Virgin and Connex. Not all have failed to provide a proper service, but whenever one falls out of line, the rest have to pay the penalty.

The only example of a company being penalised occurred when South West Trains, owned by Stagecoach, was fined £900,000 for cancelling train services earlier this year. It could have paid off the debt by dipping into last year's government grant of £60 million.

Joanna Woodall, of the Courtauld Institute of Art, who has had constant trouble with the inquiry service, said: "The timetable operative with whom I spoke was absolutely aware that there are serious difficulties. He informed me that one customer from New Zealand had spent 10 days trying to get through."

She said the situation was unacceptable to rail travellers, who had no recourse to any other number. It alienated potential customers and was "enormously wasteful of valuable time". It confirmed the "widespread suspicion" that the privatisation of the rail network had led to a cost-cutting of the service.

Later this week, Mr Swift is due to meet Railtrack management, led by chairman, Sir Robert Horton, to call for more accountability from the privatised rail and signalling authority.

Austin

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Sketch

Dropping names and donkeys

Simon Hoggart

SINCE we get a new intake of MPs only every few years, the new names resemble a geological core sample, identifying a new generation. Many new Labour MPs sound as if they should be pop singers. They include Kali, Dari, Kerry, Fabian and Candy.

The new Tories tend to be more reminiscent of the scapegrace heroes in a Jilly Cooper novel. We have no Lysander, but we do boast a Dominic, a Damien and a Crispin.

It was Crispin Blunt (C, Reigate) who rose yesterday to ask the Heritage Secretary, Chris Smith, about the minimum wage and and its effect on tourism.

It was a Crispin sort of question, but it got a Blunt reply. Mr Smith replied that the new MP himself had said: "You could put up a donkey as the Conservative candidate for Reigate and still win."

Lucky for them, one reflected. In most Tory seats you could put up a donkey as Labour candidate, and they could still win.

Mr Ronnie Fearn (LD, Southport) was worried about the effect on the hotel trade. A seaside MP, his dress always a little more flamboyant than might be thought strictly necessary, Mr Fearn has a whiff of the pier's end about him. I feel he ought to have a catchphrase which he could incorporate in all his interventions: "Ooh, shut that loophole!" perhaps.

Mr Smith mused upon the fact that we spend some £4.5 million more on foreign travel than foreigners spend here. "Though we can't do much about the weather . . ." he added.

"What modesty!" shouted a few Tories. They are developing a line in heavy sarcasm.

Mr Francis Maude, the new shadow heritage minister, inquired again about the minimum wage. Given that The National Heritage is a euphemism for "what people do to have fun in their spare time", he seems a strange, rather Haguish choice. You can't imagine Mr Maude on the terraces at a football match, or buying a lottery ticket, or even knowing how to switch on a TV.

One senses that he spends his free time studying pre-Gutenberg incunabulae, or memorising every constituency and its majority, like his leader used to do.

Either way he is the precise opposite of Tony Banks, who yesterday was asked by Phil Woolas, the Labour MP for Saddleworth, if he would visit the village, and in particular, "our beautiful culture in Saddleworth".

Mr Banks became quite eloquent about Saddleworth, though not in the way Mr Woolas might have hoped. "The friends of Saddleworth Museum are legion in this House," the minister said.

"At the recent byelection it was one of the most fascinating — indeed, the only interesting thing to visit." Mr Banks went on to suggest that instead tourists should visit the Outfall Sewer Walk in his own constituency.

Apart from wondering why anyone should prefer to walk past a river of shit in London when they could be striding across the Pennine moors, this is terribly unfair on Saddleworth. I recall a blissful summer evening spent at the Saddleworth Brass Band competition some years ago. The only drawback was that the bar was blocked solid by members of Wingate's Temperance Band.

Mr Andrew Rowe (C, Faversham) was in a gloomy mood. He spoke about film makers, "who try to cram in as much gratuitous violence, sex, and other unattractive features of modern life, as possible."

I didn't think there was anything especially modern about violence — ask Xerxes or Hannibal. And sex, while Mr Rowe may find it unattractive, has played its full part in keeping our species going for many millenia, from even before William Hague was born.

Mr Banks was asked about the spending of lottery money. "As for the millenniun dome," he said, "that now is a matter for the Dome Secretary."

PM puts global warming at top of agenda in impassioned plea to UN on behalf of future generations

Blair takes green lead at UN

Paul Brown in New York

TONY BLAIR put preventing global warming and saving the world's forests and fresh water supplies at the top of his government's agenda yesterday when he addressed the United Nations general assembly in New York.

The Prime Minister also took the opportunity to attack the United States administration for failing to set targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Talks on climate change, due in Japan in December, would fail unless the US — which generates 20 per cent of greenhouse gases — took its responsibilities seriously.

In a loudly applauded speech which was designed the push Britain forward as a world leader in environmental matters, Mr. Blair confronted the most controversial issues at the UN's Earth Summit follow-up conference: poverty, climate change, lack of fresh water, and the inability of leaders to agree on how to save the remaining forests.

"This is my fifth international meeting in eight weeks in office," he said. "My three young children in London complain I am never at home. But if there is one summit they would want me at, it is this one."

With the US vice-president, Al Gore, in the audience, Mr Blair attacked the failure of President Bill Clinton's administration to tackle the issue of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. This may not have dismayed Mr Gore, since he was elected on a green ticket and it is the rightwing Congress which is preventing action. In a speech on Thursday, Mr Clinton will have to address America's lack of commitment on reducing emissions.

Mr Blair first tackled poverty. He said: "Reducing poverty is in our interests. The poverty of landless and desperate people causes most of the destruction of the rainforests. And it is the reduction of the rainforest, the lungs of the world, that threatens the stability of our climate."

He declared his support for the UN target of reducing by half the number of poor people in the world by 2015 — a figure which does not appear in the proposed final declaration for the conference.

"It takes less than an hour to fell a tree. It can take a lifetime to replace it. If we are serious about sustainable development we must be serious about sustainable forestry management."

A key issue facing the conference — which is to discuss progress on the environment since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 — is lack of clean water supplies. Britain has offered to act as an international mediator in disputes over water supplies, particularly where large rivers pass through more than one country.

The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, who was also in New York, said the UN was setting up mechanisms to rule on water disputes. Britain, which does not have to share water with anyone, was ideally placed to act as a mediator.

Mr Blair told the UN: "There is a liquid more precious than oil: water. Yet while some countries expect running water on tap, too many people in the world get through the day on what they can carry back from the morning trip to the well."

But the most controversial part of his speech was on climate change. Mr Blair said Britain's target of a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide by 2010 would require significant measures to achieve. It had met its target aimed at stabilising emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000, but others had not. In a clear reference to the US, Mr Blair said: "Unless the great industrialised nations play their part our targets will not be taken seriously.

"The biggest responsibility falls on those countries with the biggest emissions. We in Europe have put our cards on the table. It is time for the special pleading to stop and for others to follow suit.

"We are all in this together. No country can opt out of global warming or fence in its own private climate."

Mr Cook said later: "The UK is making it clear it wants to take the lead in the international environment arena."

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, who was also at the conference, said: "No one is pretending that the carbon dioxide and other targets are easy. But there must be tough binding targets in Japan and no industrialised country must be allowed to duck its responsibilities."

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The Devil's Own, seen by Harry, 12, despite its 15 certificate

Diana issues a public apology for taking sons to see IRA film

Kamal Ahmed and Dan Glaister

DIANA, Princess of Wales, took the unprecedented step of making a public apology yesterday after taking her sons to a controversial film about the IRA even though one of them was under age.

She took princes William and Harry to see The Devil's Own at her local cinema in Kensington, west London, on Sunday.

The film, which has been criticised for glamorising IRA violence, has a 15 certificate and Diana had to persuade cinema staff to allow Harry, aged 12, into the screening. William was 15 on Saturday.

Her actions were branded "irresponsible" last night and the Kensington Odeon has been given a formal warning by the local authority for letting in an underage person. The cinema has launched an internal inquiry.

"The staff are more to be pitied than blamed," said Mary Weale, chairwoman of the Kensington and Chelsea licensing committee. "They were faced with the Princess of Wales, not exactly an ordinary member of the public.

"But we have to send out a strong message that the rules are to be respected, whatever the person's status."

The Devil's Own has generated a storm of protest for its alleged pro-IRA slant. Even its star, Brad Pitt, described the film as "the most irresponsible bit of film making that I've ever seen".

The plot centres on a Republican sympathiser who flees to America after his father is shot. Its sympathetic portrayal of an IRA supporter was described as "sickening" by Andrew Hunter MP, former head of the Tory Northern Ireland Committee.

The princess said she was unaware of the film's content when she arrived with her sons and two protection officers at the cinema.

A spokeswoman said: "She apologises for any distress which may have been caused by her taking her sons to see this film."

Cinema staff said Diana seemed surprised when an usher said Harry would not be allowed in. "But then she pleaded with him, saying she couldn't possibly leave Prince Harry behind. So we relented."

Under licensing laws responsibility for who watches films lies with the cinema which can have its licence to show films withdrawn. Parents cannot be held liable for trying to take their children to restricted films.

"She should take greater care about what her children see," said William Ross, the Ulster Unionist MP for East Londonderry. "There have been a number of films in recent years about the IRA which give a twisted view about what is happening."

Ron Hanlon, marketing director with Odeon cinemas, said that it was "abundantly clear" to staff that the licensing policy had to be adhered to, whoever the person was.

Diana flew to New York yesterday for a private view of her dresses which are being auctioned for charity.

The Princess of Wales arriving in New York yesterday, before a private viewing of her dresses PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN STILLWELL

Review

Paying homage in heady rhythm

Tim Ashley

Gidon Kremer/Meltdown
Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

"IMPREGNATED with sweat and smoke, smelling of lilies and of urine, splashed by the variety of what we do, legally or illegally" was how a florid programme note — by John Adams, no less — described the music of Astor Piazzolla, the Argentinian tango bandsman par excellence, who work has, of late, acquired cult status.

It is not hard to see why: this is heady, addictive stuff, evoking the noctambulist world of the big city at four in the morning, a world of sleazy, smoke-filled dives and casual pickups.

It is the music of desire without consummation. Formality is combined with licence. The classical tango (forget Valentino strutting in chaps, or the over-the-top posing of Come Dancing) employs a choreographic language of sexual domination and submissive yielding, though the dancers' bodies never press against each other.

Piazzolla similarly keeps his meandering harmonies in permanent suspense over the languid rhythmic pulsation, and teases with the promise of a resolution that never comes. As with jazz, the instrumental combo plays a series of improvisations on a basic theme.

The finished product is emotive, sexy and virtuoso, and it is hardly surprising that Piazzolla has become the focus of the "crossover" craze.

Last year Daniel Barenboim scandalised Berlin's musical conservatives by forming a tango band. Gidon Kremer, meanwhile, has now brought his own combo to London to open this year's Meltdown festival with a concert significantly called Hommage à Piazzolla. Kremer essentially presents a meditation on the tango rather than the dance itself.

Piazzolla's core combo — violin, piano, bass and the accordion-like bandoneon — is maintained, but the original gritty sound has acquired a touch of American cool and a whiff of classicism. The piano splashes impressionistically. The bass is bluesy. The bandoneon's dark tones are used sparingly — lots of filthily difficult treble stopped-glissandi and harmonic slithers — though his virtuosity is expressive, never vacuously showy.

Interwoven with Piazzolla's own music are new pieces and tributes — the riffy My Happiness by Leonid Desyatnikov, a tentative send-up called Instead Of A Tango, by Giya Kancheli. At the end tango collides with Haydn as the performers leave the platform one by one after the fashion of the Farewell Symphony, leaving the bass on his own, endlessly repeating the basic rhythm.

The standing ovation at the end was richly deserved, though I kept wondering whether the performance really belonged in the concert hall. Most of the time I wriggled in my seat, wanting to get up and dance.

Wonderful though it was, the simple fact remains that Piazzolla's music works best in the context in which he himself always played it — in the nightclub.

Kray gets 12 years' jail

Stuart Millar

CHARLIE Kray, older brother of former gangland twins Ronnie and Reggie, was yesterday jailed for 12 years at Woolwich crown court for masterminding a £39 million cocaine deal.

Before he was led away to begin the sentence, the 70-year-old told Judge Michael Carroll: "All my life I have advised people, particularly young people, never to be involved in drugs."

The former professional boxer, convicted on Friday after a lengthy undercover police operation, claimed all the stories he told police officers posing as drugs buyers were untrue.

But yesterday the judge told him he had been convicted on overwhelming evidence. "You showed yourself to be ready, willing and able to lend yourself to any criminal enterprise which became known to you. There was never a real question of entrapment of you by those officers but when caught you cried foul. I am pleased to say this jury saw through that hollow cry."

He added: "Throughout this case you have professed your abhorrence against drugs but the jury's verdict has shown your oft-repeated protestations to be hypocrisy."

Kray was convicted of having offered to supply five kilogrammes of high-purity cocaine every fortnight for two years and of supplying two kilogrammes of cocaine.

Ronald Field, an electrician, aged 50, from Raynes Park, south-west London, admitted the two offences and received nine years. Robert Gould, a builder, 40, from Wimbledon, south-west London, admitted supplying two kilogrammes of cocaine and was sentenced to five years.

The sentence ensures a member of the Kray family will remain behind bars into the next millennium. His younger brother, Reggie, is due to be released next year.

Couple drown in river after 'moonlight flit to avoid £100 Highland hotel bill'

Erlend Clouston

A YOUNG English couple drowned in a Highland river yesterday minutes after apparently doing a moonlight flit to escape a £100 bill.

Their car skidded into a 15ft deep pool as they drove away from the hotel in Kinlochewe, Ross and Cromarty, at 4am. Skidmarks suggest that the driver was travelling fast and misjudged the bend above the River Grudie, three miles away.

Matthew Wylie, the manager of the Loch Maree hotel where the couple — believed to be from the London area — had spent Sunday night confirmed that they had not paid for their overnight accommodation and had charged dinner and drinks to their room.

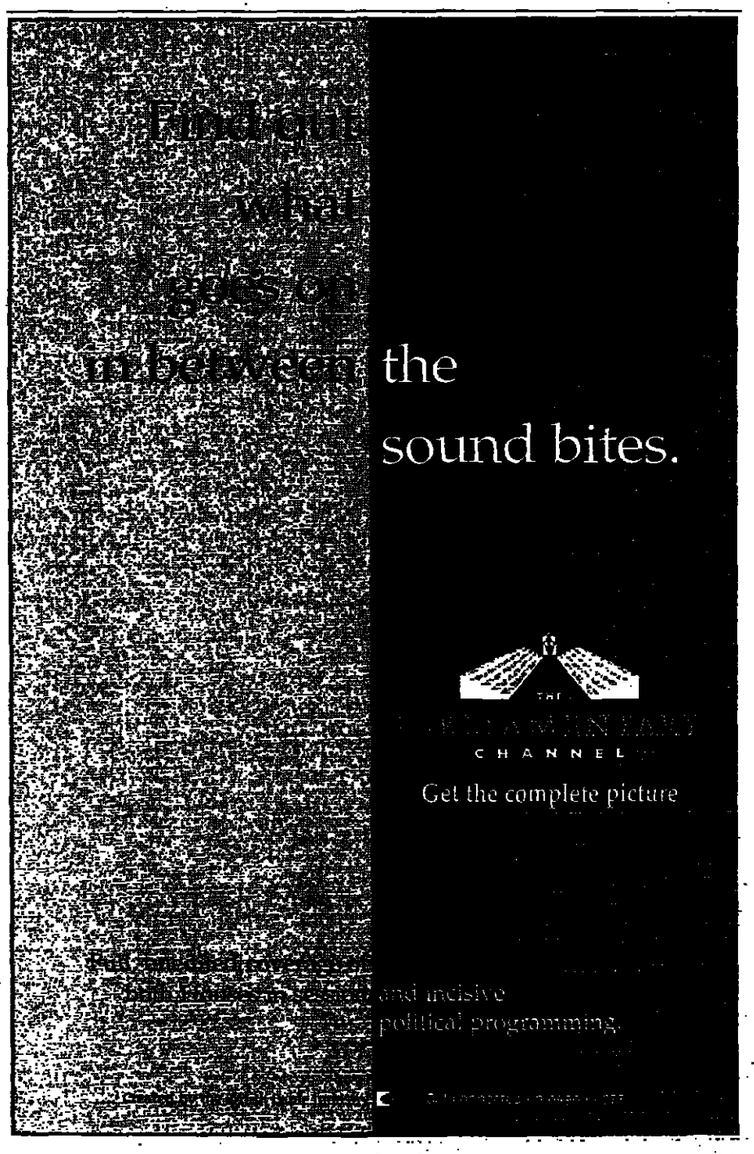
Britannia sails into Hong Kong for the last hurrah

continued from page 1

election platform not to use public money to fund a replacement for the royal yacht.

The defence minister Lord Gilbert told the House of Lords earlier this month that the new government was studying "four or five very interesting proposals" for a privately funded substitute.

Proposals for the Britannia's own future are also legion. They range from turning it into a floating classroom or museum, to renting it out as a wedding venue at the Brighton Marina. Michael Jackson's offer to buy it has been rejected. An offer from Hong Kong cannot be ruled out. The father of Tung Chee-hwa, the shipping tycoon chosen by China to replace Mr Patten, bought the Queen Elizabeth. It sank.



هكذا من الاصل

£760,000 sculpture steams into view

The Train now standing . . . David Mach's 1,500-tonne work unveiled at Darlington yesterday is the biggest piece of sculpture in Britain PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD RAYNER

'Gorgeous, sexy' train to nowhere

Martin Wainwright on a 181,754-brick version of a famous locomotive hailed for showing sense of fun and flair

"IT WAS certainly different," said foreman Norman Lord yesterday, as a ceremonial tarpaulin was hoisted from his latest job by two cranes, a gaggle of artists and a member of the House of Lords.

"Aye, it's not often you have to measure-in every brick, down to a millimetre," said assistant brickie Paul Bowman, "especially when you've got 181,754 of the things and they're shaped like, well, this."

This, racing from a grass-topped tunnel at Darlington in a brick-built cloud of steam, was Train, the biggest piece of sculpture in Britain and the old railway town's tribute to the millennium.

Weighing 1,500 tonnes and built since January at the rate of one brick every four-and-a-half minutes, the sculpture is the latest inventive landmark by the Scottish artist David Mach.

"It's just a gorgeous, sexy thing and people are going to love it," said Mr Mach, aged 41, whose previous work includes a Greek temple made of car tyres and two fibreglass wrestlers holding up a 20ft freight container. "In years to come, let's hope people will come and see Train in the same way they go to Trafalgar Square or the Pyramids."

A straggly hawthorn hedge and a site between a supermarket warehouse and the Darlington bypass make the visit, initially, less dramatic than London or Egypt. But Train was positioned authentically on the disused line of the world's first railway, George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington, and the 40-metre long sculpture is modelled on the celebrated engine Mallard.

"It comes complete with 20 'bat-bricks', too, to encourage roosting," said Mr Lord.

Largely paid for by Arts Lottery funding, the sculpture required computer graphics to cope with the curving steam billows, as well as 94 plans (one for each course of bricks) and 176 vertically aligned cross-sectional drawings.

The bricks are Accrington Nori, the strongest available, which got their odd name from a back-to-front mould which was meant to stamp on the word "iron".

"It's one of those works which raise the spirit and lift expectations," said Lord Palumbo, the former Arts Council chairman who helped commission the £760,000 project and opened it yesterday with a green guard's flag and three whistle blasts. "If there still is anyone who cavils at public art, or criticises it, they should come here."

Inevitably, some were already there, including a disgruntled group of locals without official invitations behind a wire screen.

Tim Fawcett, aged 41, a decorator on invalidity benefit, said: "I'm not the only one round here who could think of better things to spend the money on."

But Andrew Dixon, head of Northern Arts which commissioned Train as part of the Arts Council's millennial Arts 2000 programme, said Mr Mach's sense of fun and flair had won widespread support.

He said: "The North is becoming a major centre for sculpture of world standing, with works by Claus Oldenburg and Anthony Gormley already commissioned."

Mr Lord's team has grown to like the piece, too. "And don't forget," said Paul Bowman, "it's given this area 34 new jobs just building it."

David Mach astride his car-tyre submarine in 1982

In the mode

☐ A 60ft submarine made of car tyres exhibited outside London's Royal Festival Hall (1982), damaged by an enraged art lover who died attempting to firebomb the sculpture

☐ An Egyptian temple constructed out of 14 tons of newspapers wrapped round the metal pillars of a Glasgow station (1990)

☐ A stuffed lion eating a motorbike — King of the Road 1990 — now in private ownership in Chicago

☐ A car, lorry, grand piano and 45 tons of magazines making up a traffic-centred piece, called Adding Fuel to Fire (1987), now in the Metronom Gallery, Barcelona

☐ Likeness Guaranteed — a 7ft high bust of a man made of wire coat hangers (1994) — now at the Wolverhampton art gallery

☐ A pillar for Partick underground station, Glasgow, made of 2,500 postcards of Glasgow scenes plus giant photographs of "typical" Underground passengers.

☐ Two talking heads made of bits of communication cable, now at the Geneva headquarters of the Union des Banques Suisse.

Yard opens perjury inquiry into Aitken

Luke Harding

A SENIOR detective has been appointed to investigate claims that Jonathan Aitken committed perjury and conspired to pervert the course of justice, Scotland Yard said last night.

The detective chief inspector is to examine documents which suggest the former cabinet minister lied to the High Court and provided false witness statements from his 17-year-old daughter, wife and an Arab friend. It is understood the officer is from specialist operations, a branch of the Met which deals with sensitive cases including serious and organised crime.

Aitken dramatically withdrew his libel case against the Guardian and Granada TV on Friday after new evidence proved he had lied about his trip to the Paris Ritz. His mother Lady Aitken claimed over the weekend he had fled to America.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said last night: "We can confirm that we are investigating allegations of perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice."

Two officers will visit the Guardian's London solicitors Olswang later today to examine documents concerning Aitken's trip to the Ritz in September 1993 while minister for defence procurement.

At his trial Aitken insisted his wife paid his bill at the Paris Ritz, and denied that the account had been settled by an Arab business associate in breach of ministerial guidelines. His teenage daughter Victoria, friend Said Ayas, and wife Lolicia all provided signed witness statements corroborating his story.

Documents obtained by the Guardian revealed categorically that Aitken had lied about his Ritz stay. They included British Airways flight coupons and hire car records which showed Mrs Aitken flew directly from London to Geneva during the weekend, and had never visited Paris.

Alan Rusbridger, editor of the Guardian, wrote on Friday to Paul Condon, the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, and Dame Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, asking them to investigate. Mr Rusbridger said there was "incontrovertible evidence" that Aitken had perjured himself as part of a "well-laid and carefully co-ordinated conspiracy".

Last night Aitken's former secretary Valerie Scott told Granada television the former Conservative MP had tried to "smear her" and prevent her from giving evidence against him. She also said Aitken's friend Said Ayas had offered her a job before the trial on condition she agreed not to testify.

"I think he [Aitken] constructed his web of lies because the stakes got much higher. You must remember, when I worked for Jonathan he was a junior backbench opposition MP so he didn't have much to gain or lose," she told the World in Action programme Dagger Of Deceit.

Ms Scott said she was "very very shocked" after reading three witness statements from friends of Aitken who sought to discredit her as a witness even though "they hardly knew me".

The former Chief Secretary to the Treasury has not been seen since he left his Westminster home on Thursday. But he has spoken to his mother by telephone. He is unhappy about an article in which she blamed his wife for the trial's collapse, it is understood. The Aitkens announced their separation on Thursday.

Last night Aitken's solicitor Richard Sykes was unavailable for comment.

Hugo Young, page 9

Valerie Scott: claimed that Aitken tried to smear her

Spoilt Hollywood goes perk mad

Just a paper for Jack Lemmon but now 'Gimme' asks for more

Joanna Coles in New York

NOT content with their eight-figure salaries, Hollywood's biggest stars are now trying to outdo each other by demanding the most preposterous perks.

Demi Moore — nicknamed "Gimme", and the star of Indecent Proposal — will now wash her hair only in Evian water, while Jim Carrey, star of The Mask, insisted producers of Ace Ventura 2 supply him with a personal chef plus a cook for his pet iguana.

Unimpressed with $17 million (£10.6 million) to appear in Roman Polanski's The Double, John Travolta also demanded a dozen assistants plus make-up artists, personal trainers, stand-ins, masseurs, security guards and a personal chef. He later pulled out of the film altogether.

Sharon Stone, who shot to fame in Basic Instinct, insisted one studio build her an entire gym, in addition to keeping her wardrobe.

"You'd be shocked at how hard many $5 million players will fight to keep that business suit," one industry source tells this week's Variety magazine.

The magazine discloses that Sylvester Stallone frequently demands a special Tee-Off cage to practise his golf between takes.

Such perks add substantially to budgets. Moore chalked up $850,000 on her entourage alone on the set of The Scarlet Letter.

Geena Davis has also stamped her feet. While filming Cut Throat Island, a woman was flown from Los Angeles to Malta to powder her throat.

In the old days, a star's needs were simple, if eccentric. Peter Sellers would sleep only in a bed placed north to south, Joan Crawford would work only on a set kept at precisely 68 degrees, and Jack Lemmon still demands nothing more than two copies of the New York Times each morning.

Never before has a trial taken place of the director of genocide. "If he were to speak in his own defence we would gain an extraordinary insight into the mind of someone who was the architect of genocide and how it was carried out."
Brother Number One

G2 cover story

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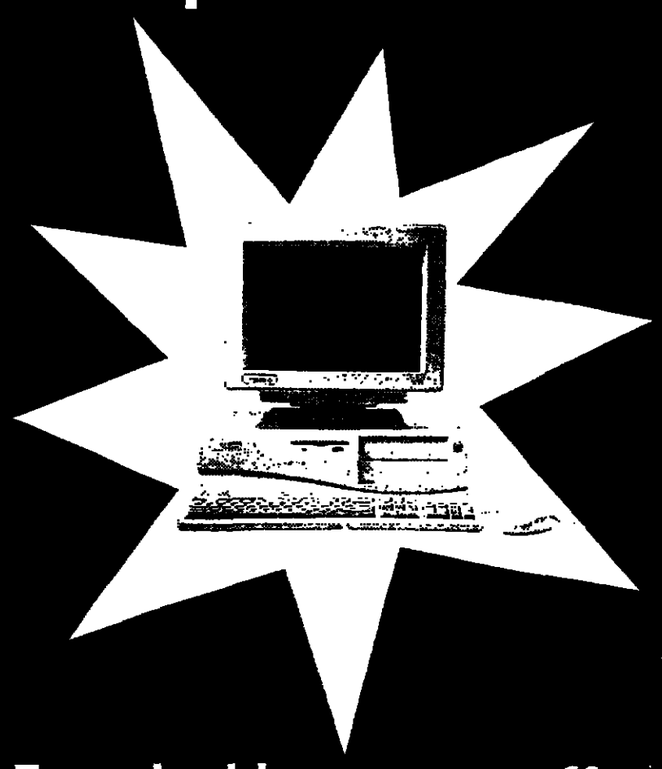

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Fact and fiction

THE 1971 India-Pakistan war broke out after the government of Indira Gandhi decided to assist East Bengal, now Bangladesh, in its fight for independence from Pakistan.

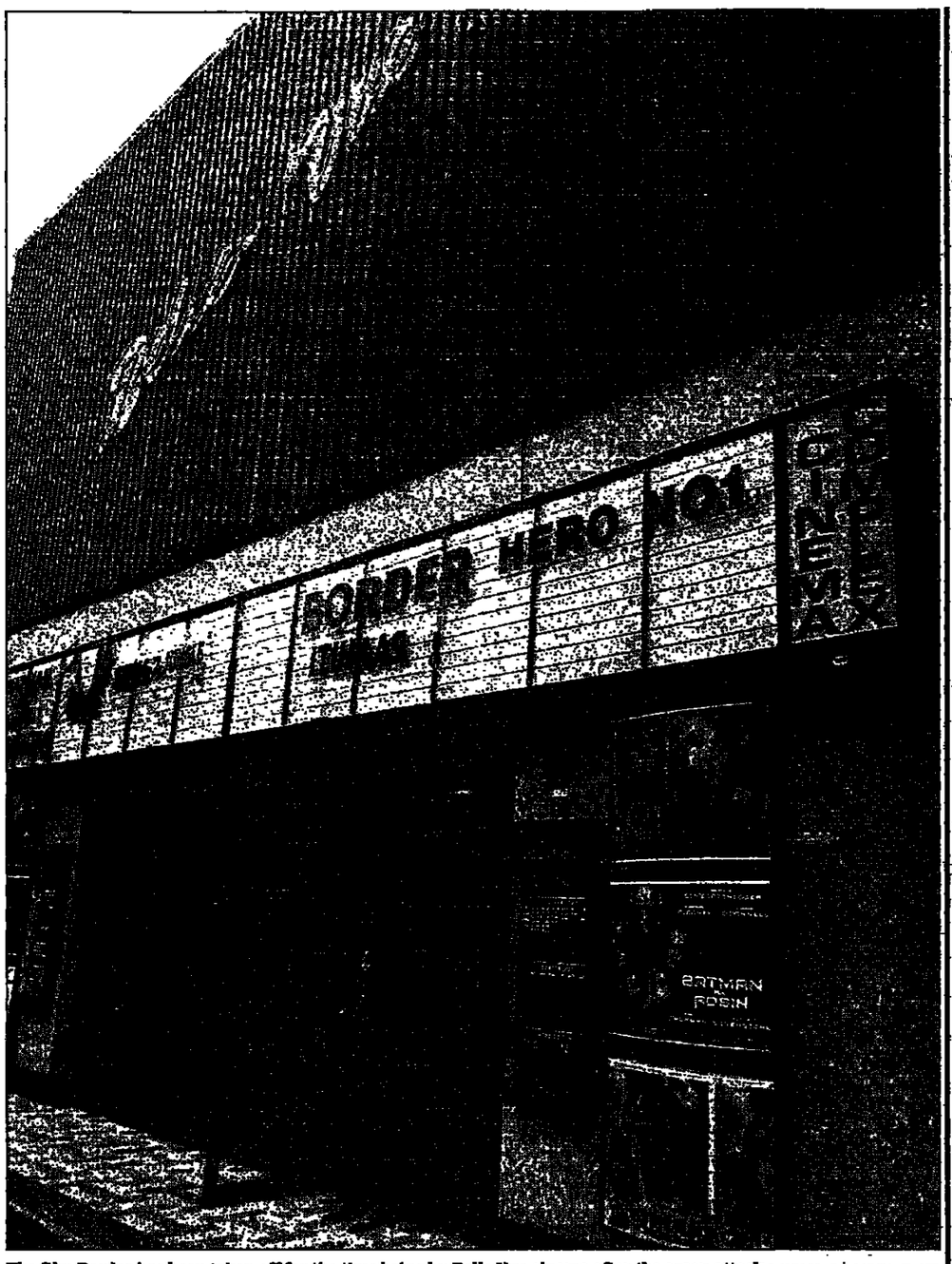
Border is a fictionalised account of the battle of Longewala, a small village in Rajasthan, eastern India, attacked by Pakistani forces on December 5 1971. It tells the story of the village and how around 120 Indian soldiers defeated an entire brigade of the Pakistani army.

Directed by J. P. Dutta, Border stars some of India's leading action heroes. The three hour film, which took just over two years to make, has been a blockbuster in India.

Like all good Indian films, Border contains mystifying costume changes during scenes and at least six long songs. Two of these in particular have proved very popular with Indian audiences.

Arson at cinema showing 'burning of Koran'

Vivek Chaudhary on Muslim anger over 'misinterpretation' of scene in Indian film



The film Border has been taken off for the time being by Belle Vue cinema after the arson attack PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

THE DISTRIBUTOR of an Indian film that is alleged to be anti-Muslim said yesterday that it had no plans to withdraw the film, despite a failed attempt to burn down a cinema.

Six hundred people were evacuated from the Belle Vue cinema in Edgware in north-west London on Sunday during a late night showing of the film Border, which depicts an incident in the war between India and Pakistan in 1971, and has been a huge hit in India. The fire was dealt with quickly and nobody was hurt.

Some sections of Britain's Muslim community want the film banned, claiming that it is anti-Muslim and glorifies India's defeat of Pakistan. One scene, said to show a Koran burning, is claimed to be particularly offensive, and it is urged that the distributor should be prosecuted under race relations laws.

The film has been on show for two weekends at eight cinemas around the country. Last week, 300 youths rioted in Leeds because a local video shop was said to be stocking the film.

Police said yesterday that a catastrophe was narrowly avoided on Sunday. A Metropolitan police spokeswoman said the fire was started deliberately, and they were searching for two young Asian men seen acting suspiciously.

She added: "There is no evidence that this attack is linked to the incidents in Leeds but detectives are aware of the controversy surrounding this film and are tkaing this into consideration."

A spokeswoman for Eros International yesterday categorically denied that Border showed a Koran on fire, and said that the film was not anti-Muslim.

"A small faction, who have not seen the film, have misinterpreted a scene and spread rumours that it shows the Koran being burnt."

In reality the scene in question showed a house on fire and a non-Muslim Indian soldier running into it to save the Koran for its Muslim resident, she said. There were no plans to withdraw the film, and it would also be released on video within the next few weeks.

Eros also offered to show alleged offending scenes to concerned Muslim groups, and invite them to a special showing of Border.

The spokeswoman for the company, which specialises in distributing Indian films, said: "It is very sad for us that this film is being taken totally out of context. There is no scene in it which shows the Koran on fire.

"The film is about the horrors of war, the effect war has on ordinary people, and it is essentially sending out a message of peace.

"It does not glorify war or any country, and we can't understand why all these people are making so much trouble over the film. It ends by showing the Pakistani and Indian flags side by side."

Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, leader of the unelected Muslim Parliament, which is leading the campaign for the film to be banned, said yesterday that he had not seen Border but had been "reliably" informed that it contained scenes offensive to Muslims.

Dr Siddiqui, who has written to the Commission for Racial Equality and the Home Office asking for the distributor to be prosecuted, said: "It appears that this film is anti-Pakistani and anti-Muslim. Its whole ethos is one of triumphalism. It should be banned immediately because it could lead to further unrest.

"Whatever the distributor says, we have been informed that the Koran scene does exist, and responsible people need to take action to stop this film."

Dr Siddiqui said that he would be willing to watch the film if invited to do so.

Border has been a huge success in India but has provoked little controversy among India's significantly larger Muslim community.

Two weeks ago, 59 people were killed and more than 100 injured in a fire at a New Delhi cinema showing the film, but investigators believe that it was an accident rather than arson.

A spokesman for the Belle Vue cinema said last night that it had taken the film off for the time being.

Damages for Wren made ill by sex harassment

Victim had to be winched off ship for psychiatric treatment

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE Ministry of Defence agreed yesterday to pay substantial compensation to a Wren who became bulimic and had to be winched off a Royal Navy ship to undergo psychiatric treatment after a sustained campaign of sexual harassment and bullying by sailors.

The 30-year-old leading hand, who can be named only as Ms O, suffered such severe trauma that she has had to retire on medical grounds after 12 years' service.

She is still on anti-depressants two years after leaving the ship.

She accepted the undisclosed settlement yesterday on the day her industrial tribunal hearing was due to start at Croydon, south London.

The MoD imposed a confidentiality clause on the deal, but the amount is thought to exceed £100,000. In February another Wren, Lesley Morris, accepted a £65,000 settlement for a four-year catalogue of indecent assault, harassment and bullying.

Kamlesh Bahl, Equal Opportunities Commission chairwoman, said: "We are pleased that the MoD has settled this case without subjecting Ms O to further distress. She was forced to retire 10 years early from a career she loved because of ill health caused by her treatment.

"The MoD and the navy must act immediately to ensure that Wrens are protected from bullying and harassment both on board ship and ashore and can work in a safe environment."

The navy originally tried to prevent Ms O from bringing her claim by arguing that she had failed to act within the three month time limit.

After she was given the go-ahead the service argued it was not liable for some incidents because the sailors were not acting "in the course of their employment".

Last year's preliminary tribunal hearing ended in a ruling that the case could proceed. The tribunal chairman, Ian Lamb, said at the time: "It seems to me when one of the public services is concerned it is a significant factor of public interest and these very serious allegations need to be dealt with."

Ms O, from Kent, was clinically depressed and suffering from bulimia and her hair was falling out when she was lifted off the ship in May 1995 after a 16-month tour of duty. "She had a constant daily level of abuse, undermining of her abilities, personal criticism of her size and shape, and indecent exposure by one man on three occasions," said her solicitor, Ian Tish.

She spent a month as an inpatient in a psychiatric hospital and was given a shore job before being retired on psychiatric grounds with effect next month.

At the preliminary hearing the tribunal heard that her trouble began when she stood up for other Wrens subjected to unwanted attentions. Ms O and Ms Morris were both regularly called "splitarse", a term of abuse for women used widely by naval ratings.

Ms O featured in a take-off on the Viz cartoon strip Fat Slags, which appeared in the on-board newspaper Lusty Lies.

She was told to "get back shoreside" where women belonged, and a picture of her was put in a men's toilet with graffiti asking how many crates of beer it was worth to have sex with her.

Cambridge poll may block pay

Donald MacLeod
Education Correspondent

CAMBRIDGE university faces financial paralysis and could be unable to pay its staff after a challenge by a don campaigning to have more women promoted.

Gillian Evans, a 52-year-old lecturer in medieval political thought, has collected 10 signatures to force a ballot of the 3,300 members of the Regent House, the university's ruling body, on an amendment to the £266 million budget.

It is the most flamboyant move in her three year battle over the restricted number of professorships and lack of promotion for women. Only 13 of 247 professors at Cambridge are women.

The ballot cannot be completed in time for the new academic year in August and allocations of money will be frozen. The university authorities are preparing emergency payments to enable staff to be paid but admitted the ballot would cause serious inconvenience. "It is a spanner in the works."

The ballot would also halt the 12 new professorships and 29 readerships planned for next term and this has angered many of Dr Evans's colleagues, who are trying to raise signatures for a counter-motion demanding that the promotions are implemented.

Dr Evans is unrepentant. She has already applied to the High Court for judicial review of Cambridge's "muddled, secretive and possibly sexist" promotion system and submitted her case to the Equal Opportunities Commission.

"I have had great warmth of support," she said. "People have written letters to me bearing out how deeply they felt their whole life's work was being sneered at."

Competition for professorships and other senior jobs at the university is intense. Many academics have been disappointed and complained that their international status was undermined.

Segers 'asked partner for alibi help'

Nick Varley
Sports Correspondent

A BUSINESS partner of Hans Segers, the former Wimbledon goalkeeper, yesterday told a jury that Segers had asked him to help provide an alibi to counter allegations of match fixing.

Alphonsus Thuys said his fellow Dutchman had asked him to help the player "walk straight out of court".

Segers had wanted him to say that the pair's ties business had earned the footballer 50,000 guilders (about £17,000) — cash which Segers claimed at his first trial earlier this year was part of the £104,000 he deposited in his Swiss bank account.

At a meeting at the player's house in January he also asked Mr Thuys, the owner of the Dutch-based firm Ties International, to stay away from the trial.

But Mr Thuys said at the footballer's retrial at Winchester crown court that he had refused. Segers had approached him a second time on the same day, again the next day in a phone call, and once more at a hotel meeting the following day.

A week later there had been another approach. "Hans Segers phoned and told me that if the police phoned don't tell anything. I answered: 'Hans, we're finished'."

Mr Thuys was giving evidence on the 14th day of the retrial of the former Liverpool star, Bruce Grobbelaar, the former Wimbledon striker, John Fashanu, and the Malaysian businessman, Heng Suan Lim, who each deny two charges of corruption. Segers denies one similar charge.

Speaking partly through an interpreter and in faltering English, Mr Thuys admitted he had paid the player cash to cover expenses arising from his work in England for the business. Asked by David Calvert Smith QC, prosecuting, about the size of the payments, Mr Thuys replied: "Very low amounts — £100 for expenses."

The only larger payments — commission for sale in Britain at the rate of 35p per tie — had been made by bank transfer between the business account and Segers's Dutch account. Five such payments totalling just over £6,000 were made from August 1994 to December 1995.

Earlier Mr Calvert Smith said it was agreed that Segers had paid the £104,000 — allegedly the proceeds of payments for match fixing — into his Swiss account over the course of a year until November 1994.

At the first trial he had said at least £10,000 cash had come from Mr Thuys.

Mr Thuys was questioned about Segers' involvement in Ties International's operation in mainland Europe. "Did he ever receive any money from you in respect of it?" — "Never."

Cross examined by Desmond De Silva QC, Mr Thuys admitted that he still owed Segers 35,000 guilders in commission for the past three years.

Mr De Silva suggested that Segers had also invested 15,000 guilders in the company and that was what the discussions in January had been about. "Mr Segers was asking you when he was going to get his money from you — the 35,000 you owed him and the 15,000 he put in the business. That's the 50,000 guilders isn't it?" Mr Thuys: "Not correct."

The case continues.

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News in brief

'Pariah' players sue darts organisation

FOURTEEN of the world's top darts players lined up for a High Court battle yesterday against the British Darts Organisation, which they claim has made them "pariahs", unable to earn a living from the game. The players, including Eric Bristow, John Lowe, "Jocky" Wilson and Cliff Lazarenko, are suing the British Darts Organisation, alleging it has a monopoly on organising events and competitions.

When the players broke away from the BDO in 1993 to form their own sporting body, the World Darts Council, they were banned from all BDO competitions and functions.

Andrew Hochhauser QC, representing the players, told Mr Justice Potts that darts players' livelihoods depended on being able to take part in competitions for prize money. "These competitions are said to be open to all, but they alone have been denied access since 1993. We claim the responsibility for the exclusion should be placed at the door of the BDO," he said.

It was a private organisation "wielding considerable power" which "attempts to maintain a monopoly over the sport". The boycott also imposed an unlawful restraint on trade which was against the European Union's free competition laws.

Jail for perverting justice

A MAN who slept two nights in the same flat as his dead girlfriend's body, and cashed her social security benefit, was jailed for 27 months at the Old Bailey yesterday.

Malcolm Smith, aged 36, from Paddington, west London, admitted failing to report Elizabeth Armstrong's death when he discovered her lying dead on the bed. Instead, he took her benefit book and cashed her giro for £74, said Nigel Sweeney, prosecuting. It was not until neighbours noticed a smell coming from Mrs Armstrong's Maida Vale home and called police that her body was found on July 21 last year. She had been dead about 12 days.

Jailing Smith for perverting the course of justice, Judge Peter Beaumont told him he had prevented the authorities from investigating her death.

Mirror Group quits NPA

MIRROR Group said yesterday it had "reluctantly" decided to resign from the Newspaper Publishers' Association. The group, which includes The Mirror and The Independent, said it found the NPA "unsupportive of its aims both individually and collectively for the industry".

David Montgomery, the chief executive, said: "We do not wish to be a member of a club where the other members unproductively spend their time stabbing each other in the back."

Sir Frank Rogers, chairman of the NPA, said: "I regret the Mirror Group's decision. The association will continue to serve the interests of its members."

Man held in hospital 'too long'

A BRITISH man convicted of assault was kept in a mental hospital for 3½ years after being declared free from mental illness, the European Court of Human Rights heard yesterday.

Stanley Johnson, from Leicester, was sent to Rampton psychiatric hospital, Nottinghamshire, in 1984 after punching a woman in the street and being convicted of actual bodily harm — his fifth assault conviction. He was held after he should have been released, because a supervised hostel place could not be found and doctors were concerned that he might "explode" under the pressures of daily life without support.

Lawyers told the Strasbourg judges that since Johnson's release in January 1993 he had had no mental relapse. The court is being asked to find Britain in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights, which safeguards the right to "liberty and security".

Boy dies after heart attack

A SCHOOLBOY died after suffering a heart attack while playing cricket for his school team.

Alexander Edwards, aged 12, a pupil at Cheltenham junior school, was fielding in the match on June 11 when he suddenly slumped to the grass clutching his chest. He spent a week in hospital on a life support machine before his parents decided to turn it off.

Yesterday family and friends attended his funeral at his college chapel. The headmaster, Nigel Archdale, paid tribute to the boy in a letter to parents. It read: "Alexander in his short life seems to have touched almost everyone within our community . . . Every child's life is priceless, Alexander's was doubly so through the unique way he played his vital part here to the full."

Mike Watson

ON May 22 we published an article with the headline "Britain's first Muslim MP proves adept at making enemies". Mike Watson has asked us to make clear that comments made by him were confined to the selection procedure which ended in June 1996, and he has made no further statements since then.

Woman died in smear test error

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

AN INDEPENDENT review was ordered yesterday into failures in the cervical screening of women in Canterbury, Kent, as the NHS trust at the centre of the scandal for the first time admitted that a death had occurred as a result.

The chairman and chief executive of the trust have both resigned, suggesting the Government is taking a tougher line on managerial accountability for health care blunders.

The scandal could go back as much as a decade.

The trust, Kent and Canterbury hospitals, has already checked 91,000 cervical smear tests declared negative between 1990 and 1995.

Lawyers representing women and families involved in the affair believe that things were going wrong before 1990.

They also think the full extent of the failures has been hidden by the fact that tests were not checked if the woman had subsequently died or been diagnosed with cancer.

Sarah Harman, a Canterbury solicitor who is acting for more than 40 women, five of whom have died, said the review was welcome but was not the full public inquiry she and her clients had wanted.

"The important thing now is that the review must hear from the women themselves. It needs to hear their own experiences."

She added: "We also need to be reassured that not only will it look at what happened in the past, but also that it will ensure there is going to be good screening in the future."

The review was announced by Baroness Jay, the Health Minister.

It will be led by Sir William Wells, who chairs the South Thames NHS region, and will report by September.

Its findings will be published.

Lady Jay said the decisions of James Bird, the trust's chairman, and Edward Pearson, its chief executive, to take early retirement would "pave the way for new top management to take the trust forward".

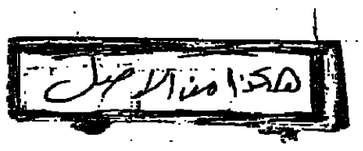
The trust separately admitted yesterday that, on a balance of probability, the death of one patient was caused by a mistake in the reading of her smear test slide.

"Although it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that the misreporting of the slide led to the patient's death, the trust has admitted liability because it is anxious to deal with the case promptly and sympathetically, with a view to an early settlement and to avoid lengthy legal proceedings," the trust announced in a statement.

Ms Harman said the case was the first of the deaths she had dealt with.

An internal inquiry by the trust found that its laboratory handling smear test slides was understaffed and had also lacked effective management between 1993 and 1995.

The laboratory has since closed. Since April this year, all cervical screening for women in east Kent has been processed in Ashford.



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Fears grow that criticism of profession may be deterring applicants ☐ Recruitment difficulties may hamper efforts to cut class sizes

Record slump in teacher training

John Carvel
Education Editor

UNIVERSITIES yesterday reported a record slump in numbers of school leavers applying to train as teachers, triggering anxiety that persistent criticism of the profession may be encouraging sixth formers to seek more lucrative and less stressful careers.

Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, said applications to start the four year undergraduate course in teacher training fell by 11 per cent this year to fewer than 50,000.

That compared with a record entry for other courses and an increase of nearly 8 per cent in total university applications.

Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, said she had warned ministers about the problem several months ago, and was planning a recruitment campaign in the autumn to convince more young people to consider teaching as a profession.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said recruitment difficulties would increase class sizes and undermine the Government's drive for higher standards in the classroom if the Chancellor did not relax controls on public sector pay.

"One of the reasons why students are turning away from teaching is the denigration and abuse of the profession that has been going on for an awful long time now. Ministers have simply got to appreciate that their drive for higher standards must be accompanied by measures to raise morale and motivation," he said.

According to Ucas, the average A level score required for entry to teaching was the lowest for any main subject group, averaging one grade C and two grade Ds.

School leavers wanting to study veterinary science or medicine needed three grade As, and the average qualification to enter maths, classics or modern languages was about three grade Bs.

Mr Higgins said applications from students graduating this summer for the one year course in September for the postgraduate certificate of education fell by 2.5 per cent.

There had been a slight increase in the numbers of graduates wanting to train to teach in primary schools, but a 6.2 per cent fall for secondary schools. The main shortage areas were for graduates who wanted to specialise in maths and the sciences.

"When the economy is doing well, there are plenty of other opportunities for graduates and so teacher training applications fall," Mr Higgins said.

"I am sure teachers feel thoroughly demoralised when Chris Woodhead [the chief inspector of schools] makes remarks about how poor they are."

Ms Millett said there was no problem with the quantity of applications for postgraduate courses in primary teaching, but she was worried about the quality, and the relatively few men applying. There was concern about numbers of graduates wanting to teach at secondary level in science, maths, modern languages, design, technology and IT. Recruitment for English, geography and RE was also difficult.

Local government leaders said yesterday that the Chancellor's adherence to spending plans inherited from the Conservatives could destroy the attempt to cut class sizes.

The Local Government Association said education authorities needed an increase of 2.8 per cent in 1998/99 — before allowing for pay and price increases — to maintain standards and provide for an extra 55,000 pupils. That compared with an increase of just 1.2 per cent allowed in the last government's spending plans.

● The Government will today add a touch of showbiz to distract from the ideological divisions on the task force being set up by David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, to identify good practice in state schools.

Sir David Puttnam, producer of award-winning films including Chariots of Fire and The Killing Fields, has agreed to join academics, teachers and administrators on the group, responsible for supporting more effective classroom techniques.

There was astonishment when Mr Blunkett announced last month that the task force's joint vice-chairmen would be Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools, and Tim Brighouse, chief education officer of Birmingham and an arch-critic of the inspection regime.

Scargill forced out of miners' charity posts

Peter Hetherington

THE miners' leader, Arthur Scargill, was suspended yesterday as trustee of two coal charities in a move which he blamed on privatisation of the industry.

The president of the depleted National Union of Mineworkers was served with a writ when he arrived for work at Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The Charity Commission formally announced its decision as part of a lengthy enquiry into the Yorkshire Miners' Welfare Trust Fund and the Yorkshire Miners' Convalescent Homes.

There was no suggestion of any personal gain or breach of procedure. But the commission said Mr Scargill, chairman of both charities, had been suspended to protect their assets.

Amid allegations of mismanagement and maladministration within the two funds, concern has been raised about a £800,000 grant from one charity to another.

Last night, after consulting his lawyers, Mr Scargill said: "All matters raised by the Charity Commissioners have been brought about by the privatisation of the British coal industry." This had resulted in a demand that local charities and trusts pay 50 per cent of any project to help disabled miners.

The NUM's problems have been compounded by a membership loss probably unsurpassed in the history of British trade unions: the mining work force has declined from 180,000 after the 1985 strike to fewer than 12,000 today.

The Yorkshire Miners' Welfare Trust was established in 1984 to "promote the health and social well being" of former miners and their dependents. The Yorkshire Miners' Convalescent Homes operates two homes and there has been a debate within the NUM about the economic case for keeping them open.

Earlier this year the commission said some trustees had claimed they had been prevented from taking a proper role in running the charities. There had been claims that inaccurate minutes had been presented to meetings of the trust fund's senior officials. Suggestions had also been made that voting procedures in effect placed control in the hands of the chairman.

But in January Mr Scargill denied that there had been any transfer of funds between the trust and the convalescent homes. He rejected as "lies" any suggestion that proper minutes were not kept.

Tennis fans Kelly King (left) and Sarah John wait for the resumption of the Wimbledon match involving their British hero Tim Henman who finally won his rain-interrupted game against Canada's Daniel Nestor 7-6 6-1 6-4 to make sure Henmania continues for at least another round Wimbledon reports, pages 26-28 PHOTOGRAPH JEFF MOORE

Fraud in the NHS costing millions of pounds a year

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

A FRAUD squad should be set up to investigate increasingly sophisticated cheating by health professionals, NHS accountants said yesterday.

Tens of millions of pounds are being lost to patient care because of erroneous claims for payment by self-employed contractors such as GPs, pharmacists, dentists and opticians, according to the Healthcare Financial Management Association.

It is calling on the NHS Executive to establish a central forensic unit to support health authorities' crackdowns on fiddles, and to work with seconded police officers on large-scale fraud.

John Flook, chairman of the association's corporate governance and audit committee, said uncovering NHS fraud was like exploring an iceberg. "We are a bit below the water line now, but we certainly cannot see the whole extent of the fraud that is going on." Last week the Government announced measures to curb prescription fiddles, estimated to cost more than £100 million a year.

But the association thinks the problem is far wider. In a survey of 82 health authorities, almost seven in 10 of the total, it found 96 cases of known or suspected fraud over the previous two years.

False claims for payment for opthalmic services were the most common type of fraud, representing 36 per cent of the total.

Although he would not put a figure on the annual cost of NHS fraud, a national crackdown could yield savings of "tens of millions". Computerising payment systems could do a lot to limit the scope for fraud.

● Eighty-two per cent of senior NHS managers think the service can no longer cope with all health demands, according to a survey of almost 1,700 managers by the Office for Public Management. It was commissioned by the NHS Confederation, which starts its annual conference today.

Inflated claims

Fraud cases included:

☐ An optician making claims for eye tests and the issue of glasses for an elderly patient who had died.

☐ An optician adding tinted lenses to a prescription for plain glasses after it had been signed by the patient.

☐ GPs claiming for "inflated" patient lists, by not removing patients from the list when they had died or moved to another doctor.

☐ GPs claiming for night visits and other "items of service" not undertaken.

☐ GPs selling drugs obtained with false prescriptions, or prescribing drugs for patients not on their lists.

☐ Pharmacists collecting prescription charges and then destroying prescription forms, when the value of medicines was less than the prescription charge.

Students warned after body found

Young woman strangled and left in hedge

Stuart Millar and Erlend Clouston

POLICE in Northampton yesterday warned students against going out alone at night after a music student was strangled and left naked in a hedge.

The body of Ryan McEwan-King, aged 22, was found near a bowling green in the Racecourse park on Saturday afternoon. She had been strangled with a ligature and sexually assaulted.

Detective Chief Inspector David Armiger said two residents near the spot where her body was found had heard a woman's screams around midnight on Friday.

"Our advice, particularly to students, is not to walk in the vicinity of the Racecourse alone."

Ryan McEwan-King: killer may have been waiting

It was possible that Miss McEwan-King had been attacked by someone she did not know who was lying in wait for her. "Sometime between 11.30pm on Friday and the early hours of Saturday she met a violent and premature death. We need the public's help to find her killer."

Miss McEwan-King, a music and drama student due to graduate from Nene college of higher education in two weeks, lived with two other female students near the Racecourse park. They have been moved for fear that the killer might have keys to their home.

Miss McEwan-King last saw her parents, who are farmers in Nemphlar, Lanarkshire, two weeks ago to celebrate her birthday.

Her father, Robin, said yesterday: "We still don't exactly know what happened. We are waiting for more news. We are absolutely devastated by this."

A keen karaoke singer, Miss McEwan-King had gone to the Romany pub around 8.30pm where she booked a slot to sing, but left before her turn came up.

She was last seen leaving another pub, the Frog and Fiddler, around 11.30pm.

The body was found in bushes by a woman walking her dog. Police believe many people walked past without realising it was there. On Saturday, a family had wedding pictures taken nearby.

Her clothes have yet to be found. When last seen she was wearing a black puffa jacket, a short-sleeved lilac Lycra top, blue denims and black zip-up ankle boots.

Mr Armiger said her appearance was striking — 4ft 8in and less than five stone. She also had short fair hair. She would have been distinctive when walking towards her home, especially if she had been with a man around average size, he said.

Tony Berry, Nene college's assistant director, said in a statement: "The college is appalled at this terrible crime and our thoughts are very much with the parents and friends .. She was a much liked and valued student."

Obesity gene found in cousins

Tim Radford
Science Editor

BRITISH scientists have discovered that severe childhood obesity can be caused by defective genes, confirming what has been suspected for decades: that in certain cases weight is not simply a matter of overeating but of hormones.

The discovery, to be announced in Nature on Thursday, homes in on a protein, leptin, produced in the body by fat cells. In effect it keeps the brain informed about fat stores. It is one of the hormones that regulate appetite and the rate at which calories are consumed, helping to keep body weight stable.

Three years ago scientists announced that they had discovered in mice a link between leptin and a gene called ob. This week Stephen O'Rahilly of the University of Cambridge and colleagues report finding a link between leptin levels and body fat in humans.

They studied two severely obese children who were cousins. They had been normal at birth but from an early age had suffered severe, intractable obesity. None of their brothers and sisters was overweight, and their parents were normal. But at age eight one cousin, a girl, weighed 86kg; the other, a boy, was 29kg at two. Each was more than 50 per cent body fat.

The team found that in each case blood levels of leptin were very low. They found one tiny change in the DNA code in the gene that controls leptin supply, at the same place for each child. This provided "the first genetic evidence that leptin is an important regulator of energy balance in humans".

The discovery could open the way for treatment with leptin — but only for people who are not making the hormone for themselves.

Professor O'Rahilly and his colleagues — based at hospitals and research centres in Oxford, London, Buckinghamshire and Birmingham — do not suggest that leptin could be a cure for the overweight.

Most people have plenty of normal leptin. Most obese people have put on the weight because they eat too much and exercise too little.

Although the discovery will throw light on how fat levels are regulated naturally, it is likely to help directly only a few.

"Discoveries like this emphasise that severe obesity is a medical condition which may have underlying genetic factors and is not due to self-indulgence," said Prof O'Rahilly.

Police warn of lethal ecstasy

Lawrence Donegan

DETECTIVES issued a warning about an a extra strong version of ecstasy known as "playboy" yesterday, after an inquest heard that a woman aged 31 died after taking half a tablet.

Lesley Bradshaw was admitted to hospital in Derby with pains in her head in February. She died when her life support system was switched off 13 days later.

Coroner Clive Rushton was told that Ms Bradshaw, of Glossop, had turned to cannabis and other drugs after suffering violence during a "dreadful" failed marriage. She had complained to her boy friend of head pains after taking the half-tablet of playboy. Medical evidence showed she had died from a cerebral haemorrhage.

The coroner recorded a verdict of death from a non-dependent overdose of a controlled drug.

Detective Sergeant Richard Gooch warned afterwards of the effects of playboy, which was stronger than other types of ecstasy tablet. Police were trying to trace the source.

Meanwhile, the mother of Andrew Woodlock, aged 13, who died last Thursday after taking three ecstasy tablets, yesterday condemned "harm reduction" drug education programmes which sought to teach children how to take drugs safely.

Mrs Woodlock, of New Stevenston, Lanarkshire, said the programmes taught in schools had led her son to believe that as long as he drank plenty of water it was safe to take the ecstasy.

"I can see where the 'harm reduction' message is coming from, but my son's death proves it does not work," she said at the launch of National Drug Awareness Week in Glasgow.

"The message we have to get across to children in high schools is that no one knows how a drug will affect them. That is why I am behind efforts to get the zero tolerance message across."

She said she would launch a campaign for tougher laws against drug dealing. Suppliers should be charged with murder, she said.

Andrew was one of six people who died from drug misuse in Scotland last week.

Actors bury cinema time capsule at Battersea power station

BATMAN and Robin stars George Clooney and Arnold Schwarzenegger yesterday put film memorabilia in a time capsule to be buried on the site of a 32-cinema complex in the old Battersea power station, on the south bank of the Thames in London.

The project, to open in 2000, will be run by Warner Village Cinemas, with seating for 8,000 people. It will cost £35 million.

Developer Parkview International has secured outline planning permission for a 4.1 million sq ft site which will incorporate a leisure complex. Plans for the rest of the 35 acre site include two hotels, two live performance theatres, film editing studios and offices.

National Heritage Secretary, Chris Smith, said the project would help London by saving one of its most important buildings, creating an entertainment complex and providing jobs.

It is disingenuous of film-makers and writers to suggest that their work does not have an effect, for its purpose is to send the audience or reader away feeling in some manner transformed. That is art's function.
Linda Grant on the censorship debate

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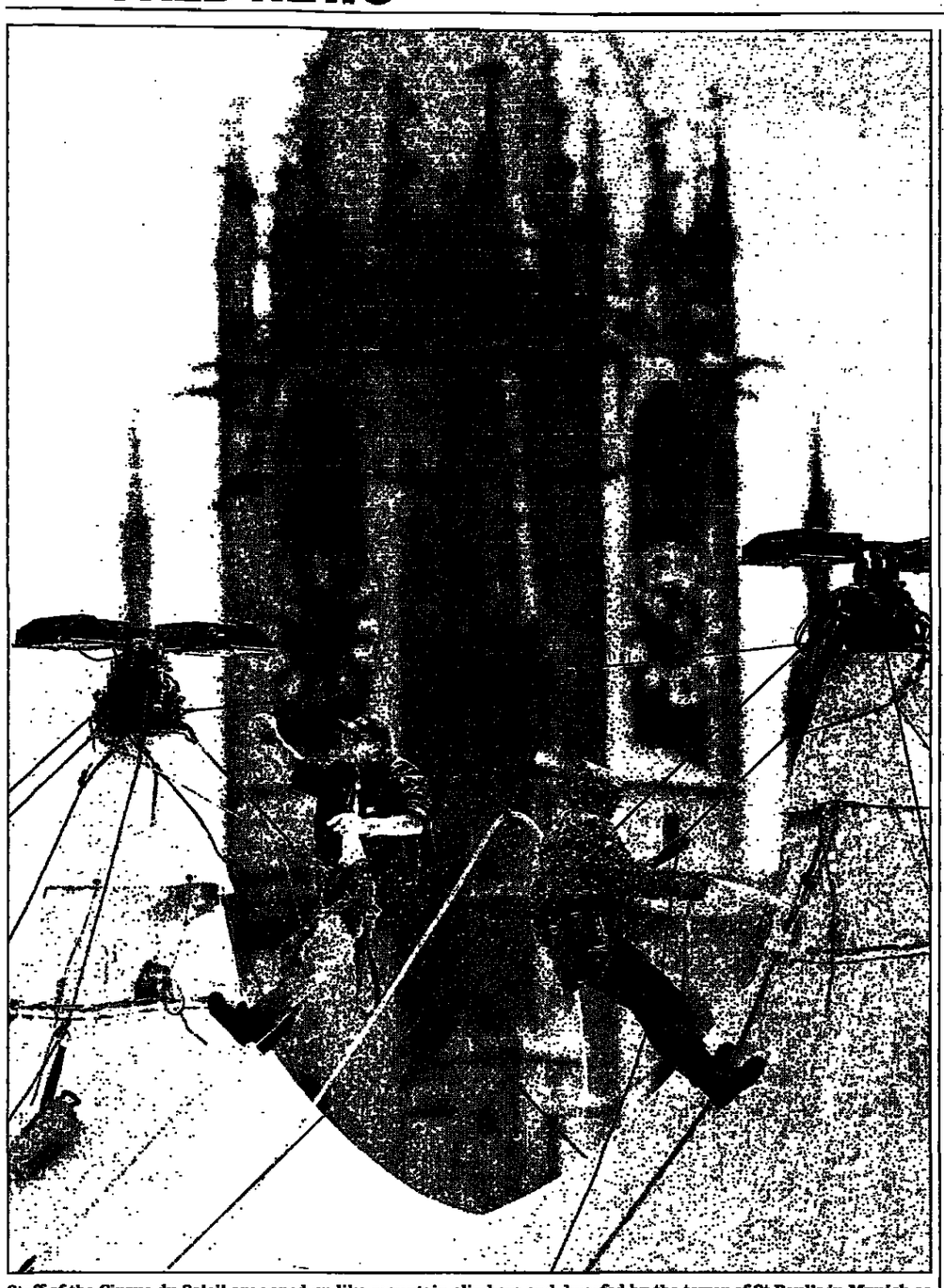

Staff of the Cirque du Soleil are roped up like mountain climbers and dwarfed by the tower of St Paul's in Munich as they clean the circus's cover and spotlights yesterday. The circus is performing in the city PHOTOGRAPH: DIETHER ENDLICHER

Environment under threat

Labour drops trade link in new promise on aid

Paul Brown in New York

BRITISH aid to Africa will not be linked to trade deals or a requirement to buy UK goods, Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, told the United Nations Earth Summit review conference yesterday.

In a radical departure from the previous practice of linking aid to trade and "political considerations", she said the Government's only interest in providing aid was to eradicate poverty.

Aid is one of the conference's key issues and the spending cuts by the industrialised world since the Rio Summit in 1992 are a sore point among developing countries.

Labour has pledged to reverse the trend and Ms Short said that the aid to the poorest countries in Africa would be increased from £250 million over the next three years to £360 million in the following three. Priorities for spending would be primary education for all, basic health care and clean water. There would be no requirement to buy any goods from Britain or to employ UK companies.

Ms Short said Britain was putting its weight behind the UN target of halving the numbers of people living in abject poverty by 2015, something that has been omitted from the final text of the five-year review document due to be adopted in New York.

She said: "The Labour government was elected with a commitment to much less inequality and much more social justice. If that applies at home, then that should also apply abroad, and that is what our aid programme will be aimed at.

"At Rio governments pledged to move towards the UN target of increasing aid to 0.7 per cent of GDP. In 1979 British aid was 0.51 per cent — last year it was 0.27 per cent, about half. We are pledged to reverse that trend.

"There will be no more mega-dam projects like the disgraceful Pergau dam in Malaysia which helped no one. We want to help the very porest and in doing so prevent the environment from suffering further damage. We want a fairer Britain and a fairer world."

The countries most likely to benefit from the new aid package are those in Africa with "British connections", such as Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, and they will be dealt with directly.

With countries like Nigeria, where relations are strained and corruption endemic, aid will be distributed through the "more trustworthy" agencies and green groups.

Abject poverty is defined as having an income of less than $1 a day, but access to basic amenities like health care, clean water and education are Ms Short's priorities.

The World Health Organisation estimates that about 1.3 billion people — 20 per cent of the world's population — have no access to clean drinking water, and about 5 million people die every year as a result.

Two faces reflected in dry seabed

Abroad, Japan's green credentials are good. But at home things are different, writes **Teresa Watanabe** in Isahaya

FOR thousands of years the Isahaya wetlands in southern Japan teemed with exotic birds and rare fish in a rich, delicate ecosystem that sustained more than 500 species of sea life, some of them endangered.

Today, however, the parched and cracked seabed stinks of death. As far as the eye can see, what was Japan's largest and most important remaining tidal flat is covered with thick beds of dead shellfish and rotting fish. In April the government shut out the sea in a controversial project to control flooding and provide farm land.

"This has become a graveyard," local activist Hideharu Yamada says, batting away mosquitoes.

The destruction of Isahaya's wetlands for a public works project — one critics say is primarily aimed at political payback to the influential construction industry — has sparked widespread protests, charges of violating international treaties and new questions over Japan's commitment to environmental protection.

The prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, addressed the United Nations Earth Summit follow-up conference in New York yesterday on Japan's leadership role in tackling environmental problems abroad. But activists say the nation must come to terms with its own chequered record at home.

"Japanese leadership? Rhetoric," says Teilchi Aoyama of the Environmental Research Institute in Tokyo. "This country still prioritises economic concerns over environmental ones."

It was not always so. Once imbued with a delicate appreciation for nature — or so the national self-image held — the Japanese spawned a religion, Shinto, that worshipped the divine in mountains, streams and even rocks. But such sensibilities have changed since the onset of high-speed industrialisation more than 30 years ago. Now Japan — which is only 4 per cent of the size of the United States in land mass but consumes as much concrete per year — has destroyed more than one-third of its tidelands.

It has dammed all but two of its 109 major rivers, razed most of its old-growth forests and littered the landscape with pylons.

Today, Japan's environmental profile is marked by contrasting faces. Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil, Japan has become the world's largest donor of financial aid for overseas environmental projects with £7.8 billion.

> Japan has dammed all but two of its 109 major rivers, razed forests and littered the landscape with pylons

It boasts one of the cleanest industries in the world. It possesses superior anti-pollution technology and emits, per person, half as much carbon dioxide — responsible for global warming — as the US.

Mr Hashimoto yesterday unveiled his Initiative for Sustainable Development, which includes plans to combat global warming and acid rain and to preserve biodiversity and coral reefs.

At the same time Japan has come under fire for what critics condemn as the wanton destruction of wildlife and natural habitats in its drive for development.

In particular, it has been criticised for corporate plundering of South-east Asia's timberlands and for threatening endangered species by seeking to revive trade in ivory, whale meat and tortoise shells.

For many activists here, the Isahaya wetlands symbolise all that is wrong with environmental policy-making in Japan: virtually no avenue for meaningful public debate on the merits of plans, an environmental assessment process conducted by pro-development ministries, and secrecy about documents.

Officials first proposed the reclamation project in 1952 as a way to increase farmland for a war-torn nation short of food. Today, however, Japan is awash in excess rice.

Officials are now stressing flood control as the main justification.

But a suppressed 1984 report commissioned by the agriculture ministry concluded that the project at its planned size would not effectively control floods. — Los Angeles Times.

French party apologises to its purged comrades

François Raitberger in Paris

THE French Communist Party, eager to shed the last remnants of its Stalinist past now that it is in government, has apologised to former officials purged in the 1960s for denouncing Stalin's crimes.

The party leader, Robert Hue, visited Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont, one of the most famous victims of the purges, on Sunday to express his regrets and promise to rewrite party history.

"Settling differences by unconditionally espousing views said to be infallible and attacking comrades on their integrity as human beings was an immense mess for all communists," Mr Hue said.

Mr Kriegel-Valrimont, a resistance hero, said the public reconciliation between a party chief and one of the "former damned" was unprecedented.

The purges stemmed from the French party's refusal to condemn the repression of the anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary and endorse the condemnation of Stalin's crimes made at the Soviet Communist Party's crucial 20th congress in 1956. Some members left the party while others became dissidents.

Mr Hue said: "Stalinism left a deep and long-lasting mark on the party. Silencing the disclosures of the 20th congress ... had heavy consequences."

Mr Kriegel-Valrimont, now aged 83, was sacked from the central committee in 1961. Mr Hue also mentioned Marcel Servin and the late Laurent Casanova, who were barred from official duties in 1961 but remained party members, and Charles Tillon who was punished in 1953 for "fractionary activities".

Analysts said Mr Hue had failed to mention perhaps the most famous victim of the purges — André Marty, organiser of the International Brigades which fought Franco's nationalists in the Spanish civil war, who became the unofficial No 2 or No 3three in the party hierarchy.

Together with Tillon, Marty was sacked in 1953, with the added charge that he had links with the police. Experts on party history believe he was sacked because his rise worried his rivals.

Mr Hue said the purges had prevented the Party from gaining strength in French society. — Reuter.

Supreme court ruling deals blow to Hillary

Martin Walker in Washington

HILLARY CLINTON suffered a serious blow yesterday when the supreme court ruled that notes taken of her debriefings by the White House counsel's office must be handed over to the special prosecutor investigating the Whitewater affair.

The independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, told the court that Mrs Clinton might "have changed her story over time" — a clear implication that he is considering a serious criminal charge of perjury.

Hitherto, the conventional wisdom in Washington was that at worst Mrs Clinton might be charged with obstruction of justice for failing to produce documents or for seeking to minimise her role in the sacking of White House travel office staff.

In the month of the 25th anniversary of the Watergate burglary, which unleashed the scandal that toppled President Richard Nixon, the familiar phrases "obstruction of justice" and "cover-up" have an ominous ring.

A perjury charge is a considerably graver prospect, and the alarm of the Clinton's lawyers was increased last week when Mr Starr, who had been focusing on events in Arkansas, re-opened an office in Washington. He issued subpoenas for two sets of notes taken by the White House deputy counsel Jane Sherburne during Mrs Clinton's debriefings by her personal lawyer, David Kendall.

The first cover her comments on her appearance before the Washington grand jury in January last year, the second, her debriefing in July 1995 about her recollection of the fate of documents relating to Whitewater, taken from the White House office of her former law partner Vince Foster shortly after he was found dead in July 1993.

> The Watergate phrase 'cover up' still has an ominous ring

She argued that these conversations with her lawyer were protected from subpoena by the attorney-client privilege. The court in effect upheld an ealier appeals-court ruling that while Mr Kendall was her private attorney, Ms Sherburne was not — as a public servant, her notes should be made available.

Mrs Clinton, in California with her husband yesterday, had no comment on the decision, pending consultation with her lawyer.

The notes, whose contents are still unknown, may never be made public, unless Mr Starr chooses to use them in court or to cite them in his final report.

Most lawyers believe that it is unlikely Ms Sherburne wrote down anything that might expose Mrs Clinton to a criminal charge. But any variance in her story from earlier statements taken on oath would provide Mr Starr with the right ammunition.

Despite an earlier supreme court ruling that Paula Jones could proceed with her sexual harassment lawsuit against Bill Clinton while he is still in office, his wife now appears more at risk from the long-rumbling Whitewater affair.

Mr Starr's inquiry into the then-Governor Clinton's role in securing a fraudulent $300,000 loan from the Small Business Administration for Susan McDougal, the wife of his Whitewater investment partner, is stalled on the unreliability of the testimony of Mr McDougal, now in prison, and David Hale, the loan administrator, who has been convicted on other fraud charges. Mrs McDougal is in jail on contempt charges for refusing to testify to Mr Starr.

Bavarian party allies add to Kohl's euro woes

Ian Traynor in Bonn

DECLARING that they would not father a euro with a "birth defect", Bavaria's ruling conservatives confronted Chancellor Helmut Kohl about his single currency policy yesterday.

The latest Eurosceptical salvo from Munich has added to Mr Kohl's problems as he races to get Germany fit for the single currency, and to persuade a hostile public of its merits.

The row coincided with strong signs that the Franco-German agreement on how to run the single currency, cobbled together at the European Union's Amsterdam summit last week, was collapsing.

Bernd Protzner, general secretary of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), the sister party and coalition partner of Mr Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) in Bonn, warned the chancellor that he had "no right" to issue instructions about the single currency to the Bavarian premier, Edmund Stoiber.

Mr Kohl is furious with Mr Stoiber, who has made himself Germany's leading sceptic on economic and monetary union and been openly contemptous of the Kohl line.

Last week Mr Kohl accused him of "unusually foolish talk" on the euro, and warned that he might turn the single currency into an election issue next year if the Bavarians did not back down.

In his desperation to see the euro launched on schedule in 1999, Mr Kohl is making it plain that a relaxation of the terms would be all right by him. On Sunday his number two, Wolfgang Schäuble, said it did not really matter if the key 3 per cent budget deficit limit was exceeded by a few decimal points.

But the Bavarians have demanded the most rigorous possible reading of the EMU criteria, insisting that 3 per cent means exactly that. Mr Stoiber and his colleagues are alarmed at the looser stance taken by the new left government in France and the prospect of a weaker euro.

"The CSU has said clearly and unanimously that it will not allow the single European currency to be born with a birth defect," Mr Protzner said.

While Mr Kohl finds himself under attack from Bavaria, the euro's prospects are further burdened by the widening gulf with France. Jacques Delors, the former European Commission president and adviser to the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, said Bonn was responsible for a "fiasco" in Amsterdam.

"Amsterdam shows that the wheels of co-operation between France and Germany are not working well," he said. Accusing Bonn of monetary racism against southern European countries, he said: "The German arrogance in Amsterdam shocked me."

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Abbey National Investor 60	4.33	5.29	5.77	90 days

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Clash feared on Pol Pot trial

Martin Walker in Washington

THE fast-developing international plan to arrest the former Cambodian leader Pol Pot on a Canadian warrant for genocide and put him on trial before an international war crimes tribunal threatens to provoke another clash between the United States and China, just as Congress faces a difficult vote on extending China's trade privileges.

With a veto on the United Nations security council, China could block Cambodia's request for a trial under UN auspices of Pol Pot, whose Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge regime is accused of causing up to two million deaths in the aftermath of the Vietnam war.

But Norodom Ranariddh, the Cambodian first prime minister, warned that Pol Pot might not be easy to evacuate from the remote northern jungle where he is being held captive, and may not live to face trial.

"It appears to me that some Cambodians, and maybe some countries, are not really willing for Pol Pot to be alive and be brought to justice," he said yesterday. "There are some people who don't have interest in bringing him to court. Pol Pot will say: 'These people are involved, these countries supported me for years.'"

Pol Pot's arrest last week by a rebel faction of his Khmer Rouge troops sparked a flurry of diplomacy. The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, telephoned her Canadian counterpart, Lloyd Axworthy, at 6am on Saturday, asking for an arrest warrant. Canadian and Danish criminal laws against genocide take no account of national boundaries.

The Cambodian authorities, racked by bitter political rivalry between two co-premiers who agree only on the need for Pol Pot to be handed over to the UN, have made it clear that they want him out of the country swiftly and discreetly, rather than have him linger on as a political symbol or target for revenge.

They have asked for a plane and a military escort to fly him out. Yesterday US diplomats in Phnom Penh were negotiating with Australia and other countries in the region to provide one.

After its involvement in the secret bombing campaign against Cambodia that helped provoke the political chaos in which Pol Pot came to power, the US is reluctant to be seen taking the lead in this evacuation. Its own evacuation of Phnom Penh in 1975 still evokes grim memories of American humiliation in the Vietnam war.

Either in detention or on trial, Pol Pot alive and testifying freely could inflict deep embarrassment: his regime was backed by China as it fought Vietnam in the late 1970s, and successive Thai, Laotian and Burmese officials maintained links with the Khmer Rouge even after Vietnamese troops forced him from power in 1979.

"We will be seeking to ensure that international justice is carried out against this major war criminal," Ms Albright said, pinning US prestige firmly to the demand for a trial that threatens to outdo in public drama the Bosnian war crimes trials at The Hague.

US officials see two possible routes to putting Pol Pot on trial under the International Genocide Convention: extending the powers of the current tribunal on Yugoslavia or creating a new one under the authority of the internationally-backed Cambodian Peace Accord signed in 1991.

The Cambodian government insists on an arrest and trial under UN auspices.

Netanyahu faces close Knesset vote

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, faces possible embarrassment in a parliamentary no-confidence vote today after a series of scandals and cabinet resignations which have fractured his rightwing coalition.

The government and the opposition Labour Party have recalled MPs from overseas for what is widely expected to be a close-run test of strength. Israeli analysts say Mr Netanyahu's coalition runs a real risk of being outvoted, but it may be saved by parliamentary rules, which require an overall majority in the 120-seat Knesset for a no-confidence vote to oust a government and force elections.

"It seems to me the chances of mobilising a majority of more than 61 is very, very slim," said Abraham Diskin, a political scientist at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

In recent weeks the coalition of rightwingers, religious Jews and new Russian immigrants which Mr Netanyahu marshalled in 1996 has shown signs of collapsing under a succession of political blows.

The prime minister escaped indictment in April when a judicial enquiry found insufficient evidence to link him to an alleged plot to subvert the investigation of a rightwing coalition ally on corruption charges by the appointment of an unqualified attorney-general, Roni Bar-On.

Mr Netanyahu claimed at the time that he had been fully vindicated, but the investigation's final report was critical of his actions. The episode appears to have damaged his credibility in his own party, the Likud.

Tension became visible last week with the resignation of the finance minister, Dan Meridor, who complained he had been manoeuvred out of office because of his doubts about the Bar-On affair.

Mr Meridor was backed by several senior Likud figures, including the communications minister Limor Livnat, who resigned her other portfolio — handling the government's liaison with the Knesset — in protest.

Another Likud veteran, the former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, denounced Mr Netanyahu and warned that an unnamed replacement was being groomed.

Natan Sharansky, formerly one of the prime minister's closest allies, has threatened to withdraw the support of his mainly Russian party, Israel B'Aliyah, because of what he described as Mr Netanyahu's broken political promises and high-handed leadership style.

The Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, votes in Likud committee elections yesterday. Today he faces a no-confidence vote in the Knesset PHOTOGRAPH: HEIDI LEVINE

Israel B'Aliyah accounts for seven of the coalition's 66 Knesset votes, but recent opinion polls suggest that it would lose seats if there was an early election.

If Mr Sharansky's followers and Mr Netanyahu's Likud opponents abstain, as expected, rather than vote against Mr Netanyahu, the coalition will almost certainly survive, but commentators say its increasingly narrow support-base will be laid bare.

The short-term outcome is expected to be a shift to the right, with potentially damaging consequences for the stalled Middle East peace process. The most immediate beneficiary of the turmoil is likely to be Ariel Sharon, a hardline former general and defence minister who was forced from office 15 years ago after the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Mr Sharon has been tipped by government sources as Mr Meridor's most likely replacement as finance minister, as which he is expected to swell the funding of for Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas.

Labour officials believe they can inflict a wounding defeat on Mr Netanyahu in today's vote, but the party's newly chosen leader, Ehud Barak, has acknowledged that it will have to widen its support significantly to have a chance of forming a stable government.

● Saudi Arabia will give the Palestinians $19 million to build 600 homes in Jerusalem and strengthen their hold on parts of the disputed city, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official said yesterday.

Kashmir tops peace agenda

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

AFTER half a century of distrust, India and Pakistan yesterday unveiled their most substantive peace agenda in more than 20 years, agreeing to talks on Kashmir and the other issues that have bedevilled relations between the neighbours since independence in 1947.

A joint statement at the end of talks in Islamabad identified key areas for negotiation by working groups. The discussions on the disputed territory of Kashmir are to be entrusted directly to the countries' foreign ministry secretaries, their most senior diplomats. They are also charged with building confidence and generally improving peace and security.

> It marks the most substantive effort to better relations since 1972

Other areas of contention whose resolution is seen as more technical than political will be handled by less senior officials. They include the Siachen glacier — the world's highest battlefield — trade, and drug trafficking.

The two sides also promised to tone down their propaganda war.

"It is our purpose that the dialogue leads to establishment of trust, friendship and co-operation between the two countries," India's foreign ministry secretary, Salman Haider, said.

But his Pakistani counterpart, Shamshad Ahmed, warned not to expect quick results. Quoting an Urdu couplet, he said: "Veils on doors will be lifted slowly, slowly."

Yesterday's statement marks the most substantive attempt to better relations since the Simla accord of 1972. Subsequent efforts failed to produce a peace agenda and dialogue broke off in 1994, resuming only this year.

A solution on Kashmir, over which India and Pakistan have fought two wars, may be years away. Although the secretaries are to meet in New Delhi in September, no timetables have been set for the working groups.

But the Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, described the agreement as a "major breakthrough in Indo-Pakistan relations". State radio quoted him as saying it was the first time India had recognised Kashmir as being disputed.

While New Delhi maintains that Kashmir is not open to negotiation, Islamabad argues that rancour over the territory has so poisoned the climate between the two that no progress is possible until the issue is settled.

The agreement appears to have satisfied Pakistan's insistence that Kashmir is of prime importance without upsetting India's strategy of winning Islamabad over by boosting trade and tackling less contentious areas.

● The self-appointed champion of India's downtrodden, Laloo Prasad Yadav, was charged with 55 others yesterday in connection with a 9,500 million rupee (£160 million) corruption case involving purchases of animal feed. Mr Yadav, the chief minister of Bihar, is the first serving premier to face criminal charges.

Hani's family oppose his killers' plea for amnesty

A BATTLE to decide the future of the two men who murdered the South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani began before Bishop Desmond Tutu's truth commission yesterday, *David Beresford in Johannesburg writes.*

Lawyers for the Hani family formally announced their intention of contesting the attempt by the former MP Clive Derby-Lewis and a Polish immigrant, Janusz Walus, to obtain their freedom.

About 200, mainly black, protesters surrounded right-wing whites in the town hall of Benoni, east of Johannesburg, to see the two men appear before the commission's amnesty committee. Winnie Mandela and Hani's widow, Limpho, were in the crowd.

As the men were brought under heavy police guard, the hall erupted in jeers and protesters waved placards demanding: "Tell us who gave you orders to kill Hani?"

George Bizos, the lawyer representing the Hani family and the Communist Party, said they would be opposing amnesty for the two men on the grounds that they had failed to make full disclosure of the circumstances of the 1993 murder, that they had not been acting on behalf of any political organisation, and the disproportionate nature of the crime in relation to any political goal.

The committee agreed to postpone the hearing until August 11.

News in brief

Lawyers hopeful of victory for PoWs

LAWYERS for British former prisoners of war were optimistic of victory in their battle for compensation from the Japanese after the climax of their legal battle yesterday.

Judges in Tokyo heard Frits Kalshoven, professor of International Law at Leiden University in Holland and the leading academic in the treatment of PoWs, back the 10,000 Britons who are each claiming £14,000 for treatment they endured during the second world war.

Japan believes that there is no case, since the survivors of the 50,000 interned Britons received compensation of £76 under the terms of the 1951 San Francisco treaty. But Prof Kalshoven said that under the 1907 Hague Convention, individuals were able to make claims for abuse of human rights.

The PoW's British lawyer, Martin Day, said a final hearing would follow in September to "mop up loose ends" and he was hopeful of a decision this year.

Germany jails Algerian pair

TWO SONS of the Algerian fundamentalist leader Abassi Madani were jailed by a German court yesterday for belonging to an outlawed support group for anti-government forces in Algeria.

Salim and Ikbal Abassi, aged 30 and 26, received jail terms of 32 and 28 months after the Düsseldorf court found them guilty of forging passports and documents to help Islamic radicals enter the country.

Abassi Madani is the founder of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front. The two brothers fled to Germany and were granted political asylum in 1992 after their father was arrested. The court acquitted them on charges of running guns and ammunition to Algeria. — *Ian Traynor, Bonn.*

Lagerfeld to challenge tax fine

FASHION designer Karl Lagerfeld said yesterday he would appeal against a French court decision ordering him to pay nearly F18 million (£1.86 million) for tax evasion.

The administrative court in Nice set the figure, which includes back taxes and fines, France Info radio reported. Mr Lagerfeld claims to live in Monaco, where residents do not pay income tax.

He said the prosecution "recognised in its final statement my good faith and the fact I lived in Monaco. I've therefore decided to appeal [against] this decision." — *AP, Paris.*

France backing Bangui force

FRANCE said yesterday it was giving logistical support to African peacekeepers in the Central African Republic's capital, Bangui, after clashes with disaffected local troops killed about 30 people.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Yves Doutriaux, confirmed that France had intervened with "limited logistical support" after the troops started firing mortars at Chadian and Senegalese positions on Sunday afternoon. — *Reuter, Paris.*

Tourists standed in Athens

DOZENS of tourists were stranded at Athens airport yesterday as a "go slow" by Olympic Aviation engineers hit flights to the Greek islands.

Officials said at least 20 flights were cancelled or delayed for up to four hours and passengers were crammed inside the old airport or standing outside in sizzling heat. More delays are expected over the next two weeks.

The engineers have banned overtime and demand instead that Olympic, deeply in the red, hires more staff. — *Reuter, Athens.*

Home on the range

TWO golf balls suit a pair of grebes to a tee as an instant family at a golf club in Saskatoon, Canada. The birds adopted the balls after building their nest near the driving range about three weeks ago PHOTOGRAPH: MITCH COOPER

Iranian mine blast kills 15

AN EXPLOSION at a coal mine in northern Iran on Sunday killed 15 people and injured 29, the Iranian daily Ettelaat newspaper said yesterday.

The official news agency IRNA reported earlier that 150 people had been trapped underground. It was not clear if they had been rescued.

The agency quoted an official in Gilan province as saying the blast was caused by a short circuit. — *Reuter, Dubai.*

Duma opposes Lenin's burial

THE Russian Duma yesterday urged citizens and the authorities to oppose the burial of Lenin's mummified body.

In a non-binding resolution, the lower house branded attempts to remove the embalmed body from its Red Square mausoleum as "an act of political revenge against Lenin".

The fate of Lenin's body has become a subject of heated debate since President Boris Yeltsin's call for a referendum on the issue. — *Reuter, Moscow.*

Extra Chinese troops allowed in

Hong Kong 1842-1997

John Gittings

FIVE hundred extra Chinese troops will arrive early in Hong Kong next week, a final slap in the face for British diplomacy.

The Hong Kong government put a favourable gloss on the climbdown yesterday, announcing that the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group (JLG) had agreed on the arrival, shortly before midnight on June 30, of "a small number of advance elements" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

When two weeks ago China first demanded an extra advance party — in addition to the nearly 200 soldiers already in Hong Kong — the head of the British team on the JLG, Hugh Davies, insisted that there were enough PLA soldiers already in place to "switch on the lights".

Hong Kong opinion, inured to shocks of this kind, remains calm and even optimistic. A South China Morning Post poll showed that the Democratic Party is nearing the level of support it enjoyed in the 1995 election, when it won most of the elected seats.

Confidence in the economy stands at nearly 30 per cent, and more than 50 per cent believe that freedoms will not be affected, despite Beijing's refusal to accept the 1995 legislative council. Yesterday this body entered the final session of its truncated life.

Fear of an increase in corruption along mainland lines is more widespread. The new Beijing-approved chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, has promised to support the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Yesterday its commissioner, Lily Yam, promised "an all-out effort to prevent a return to the bad old days". Asked how Hong Kong would deal with demands by mainland leaders to secure privileges, Mrs Yam said there would be careful scrutiny of "newcomers and new businesses".

The PLA's image, fostered by Chinese reports that all the soldiers involved are hand-picked and well versed in the law, had already been tarnished by an incident involving the commander of the advance party, Major-General Zhou Borong, who complained that he was held up by customs officials at the border.

The governor, Chris Patten, described this as a misunderstanding and said that the PLA had been exemplary in their behaviour.

Britain now accepts the Chinese argument that the extra troops are needed so that the PLA can "assume defence responsibilities as from zero hours on July 1".

No one has explained what these responsibilities might consist of, amid the fireworks and festivities. Observers believe that the reason for Beijing's demand is the decision of President Jiang Zemin to attend the handover. PLA leaders feared they would lose face because so few soldiers would be in place.

Britain can claim that it has kept the initial number in the hundreds: it is believed that up to 10,000 PLA soldiers will eventually be sent to Hong Kong.

End of the line for colony in Beijing's rail network

John Gittings in Shenzhen

OF ALL the projects to mark the return of Hong Kong to China, none is greater than the one that starts here. A new railway has been completed from Beijing to the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) — 1,500 miles of track which open up a swath of eastern and southern China and join the line into Hong Kong.

"Greet the return of Hong Kong by promoting railway safety", a huge banner proclaims at the just-completed station of Jinggangshan, high in the mountains of Jiangxi, where Mao Zedong founded the Red Army in 1927.

The Jingjiu (Beijing-Kowloon) line is the latest addition to a transport and communications grid that now knits Hong Kong to the mainland interior.

A network of motorways in the Pearl River delta was expanded this month with the opening of a bridge across the river at Humen, cutting travelling time from Hong Kong to the western side of the delta by up to six hours. It will also provide the link for a new southern highway the length of Guangdong province.

Travellers on the Jingjiu, and its branch line in Guangdong, will encounter unusual treatment by Chinese standards. Stewardesses introduce themselves by name and can be summoned by a bell. As the train leaves each station, they stand to attention and salute.

Lavatory paper is available, and is actually replenished during the journey. And instead of a surly sweeper cleaning the floor, there are litter bins, described in the promotional literature as a modern innovation.

At present the through train from Beijing terminates short of Hong Kong at the Shenzhen border, but before long it will complete the journey into Kowloon.

The Jingjiu opens up the eastern provinces of Anhui and Jiangxi. There was fierce competition to become a "railway town", and several have already attracted foreign investment, including Jinggangshan.

Its real name is Talhe: Jinggangshan, it turns out, is still 60 miles from the station. Passengers arriving at night bed down in the local police station, which makes a useful income from the service.

The line into Guangdong alternates between tunnels and viaducts of equally impressive length, passing through a jumbled mountain plateau where 70 years ago communist guerrillas struggled for survival.

The growth of infrastructure between Hong Kong and the mainland has transformed travelling, and it more subtly reinforces the sense that Hong Kong is an integral part of China. More than two dozen bus services, starting in central Hong Kong, cross the border for towns all over Guangdong, reaching most destinations in three or four hours by the new super-highways. A new western crossing is planned.

Entry from the mainland to Shenzhen — and to Hong Kong — will continue to be regulated, but experts predict that post-handover traffic will rapidly increase.

The Jingjiu railway has been an almost unnoticed engineering feat. Most of the work was completed within four years. More than 200,000 labourers worked on the project, which cost £3 billion. It has reached a population of 200 million — one-sixth of all mainland Chinese — previously far from a railway.

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The taxing road to sanity

Labour may have seen a way to square the circle

THE SECOND Earth Summit opened in New York yesterday with the inauspicious admission that the prospects for the environment had deteriorated since 1992 when the Rio summit committed everyone to halting the growth of carbon emissions. Razali Ismail of Malaysia, President of the UN General Assembly, warned that, as a planet, we were "living unsustainably and perpetuating inequity, and may soon pass the point of no return". Vice-President Al Gore urged everyone to roll up their sleeves and go to work but this doesn't conceal the fact that the US, the biggest gas guzzler in the world, is one of the worst offenders and hasn't succeeded even in stabilising emissions let alone reducing them. Britain is one of the few virtuous countries (along with Germany and Russia) that have made progress — mainly due to the unexpected consequences of the pit closure programme (which led to a boom in gas-fired generating stations). Tony Blair, according to some green lobbies, seems to be espousing the environment with all the enthusiasm of the recently converted and none the worse for that. He reaffirmed Britain's aim of reducing emissions by 20 per cent by 2010 and raised expectations that he would introduce more green taxes in Britain either in this budget or later on.

Green taxes *do* work. An OECD study found that the Swedish sulphur tax introduced in 1991 led to a fall in the sulphur content in oil-based fuels to nearly 40 per cent below the legal limit. A tax differential for diesel fuel led to a rise from 1 to 76 per cent in the market share of the cleanest diesel fuels between 1991 and 1996. In Norway taxes on carbon dioxide payable since 1991 have reduced carbon emissions by fixed combustion plants by over 20 per cent a year. Heavier taxes on leaded petrol have produced a sharp switch to non-leaded petrol in a number of places including the UK. Sadly, most countries will fail to comply with the international target of freezing carbon dioxide emissions (mainly from exhaust fumes and industry) to the levels of 1990.

Mr Blair is absolutely right to point the finger at the United States. It is the biggest economy in the world yet can't do what should be done because of the electoral implications of abandoning the absurd cheapness of petrol in the US. If America increased taxes on energy, it would do itself a favour (because it would raise money to reduce the budget deficit) and make a huge contribution to reducing emissions. Even if there were no such thing as global warming it would still be economic madness to sell oil, which has been formed over hundreds of millions of years, as if it were bottled water (except that it is even cheaper than bottled water).

It is equally mad to continue to allow aviation fuel to continue to be free of tax. It distorts choices, increases pollution and removes the incentive to develop more efficient fuels. The maddest thing of all is to continue to destroy rain forests which are vital to the ecosystem. Labour's policy of exhorting the rest of the world to move faster while continuing to set the pace at home is the correct one. In this vital area it is still possible to lead by example. There are plenty of policies Labour can introduce which are worthwhile even if no one follows suit. They include taxing company cars, more car-free areas in the inner cities, penal charges for inner-city parking, higher taxes on depleting resources and tax reductions on insulating materials. Labour is pledged not to raise income taxes: but it may increasingly view environmental taxes — which aren't as hated as regular taxes — as an irresistible way of squaring the circle of its spending and taxation policies.

While the world waits for talks

The onus is now on the republicans to clarify their intentions

TWO powerful but contradictory facts sum up the facing-both-ways stance of Irish republicanism today. Electoral support for Sinn Fein is at a historic high — yet the renewal of its murder campaign has left the IRA more isolated than ever. This week, as Tony Blair comes to the House of Commons to deliver his latest Northern Ireland statement, republicans must once more face the choice which they always try to avoid. Do they end the killings, and cash in their undoubted recent electoral credit? Or do they continue with the killings in the knowledge that while their nuisance value may grow, their political isolation will continue and their electoral standing probably diminish? Moments of choice come often in Northern Ireland, but these are days which will define the mood for years.

The coalition against Sinn Fein-IRA equivocation is stronger now than ever. Labour's Commons majority and the continued caution of most Conservatives have ensured that the bipartisan approach has not been disturbed by Tony Blair's talks-for-ceasefire strategy. Opinion in the Irish Republic remains constant too, with the new Fianna Fail government making clear there will be no meetings while the shootings continue.

In Denver at the weekend, President Clinton confirmed that the White House is on board for Mr Blair's strategy, while in Washington even traditionally pro-IRA congressmen and lobbyists are looking askance at republican tactics. Unanimity of purpose across both the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean has rarely been stronger, but while such unanimity initially isolates the IRA and Sinn Fein, in the long run it also means that a decisive ceasefire move would also bring rapid and widely accepted political action. Last week when David Trimble was asked whether he could imagine himself round the table with Sinn Fein, he replied: "Never say never".

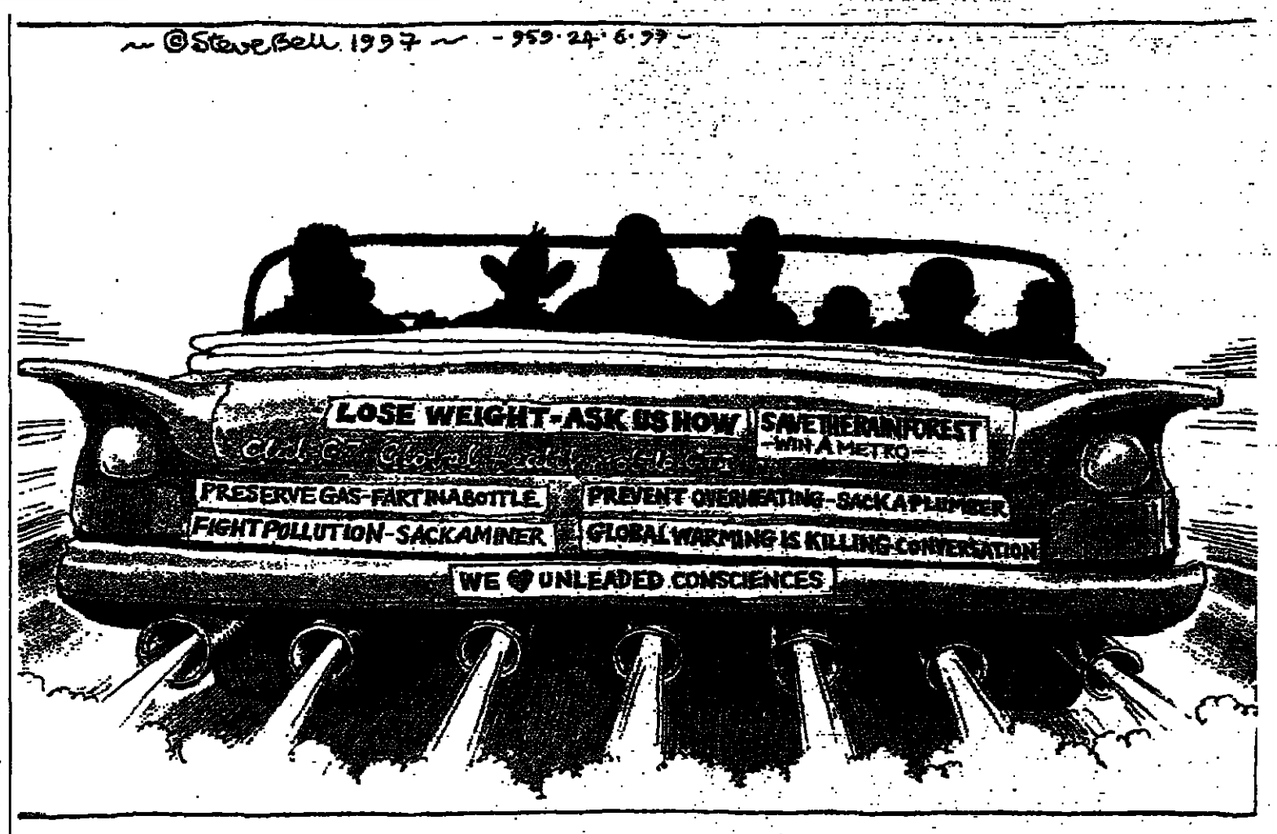
A week ago, it seemed that Sinn Fein and the Northern Ireland Office had the makings of a ceasefire-for-talks deal which could be defended. But then came the IRA's Lurgan killings, which negated the good work in the most brutal manner possible. Those killings may show that the republican movement is untrustworthy, or they may show that it is divided. But they certainly place the onus on republicans to clarify their intentions. In public, however, republican leaders continue to dodge the choices just as they have always done. Martin McGuinness's weekend speech in County Kildare contained a few guardedly positive remarks about Mr Blair's initiative, but these were made largely meaningless by the obfuscations and irrelevances elsewhere in the address. Mr McGuinness complains about being "eyeballed" by the British, as though that was on a par with the shadow of the gunman. But the truth is that his movement is being eyeballed not just by the British but by the world — and rightly so.

Much more than just skylarking

Tesco's move is the start of a new approach to conservation

THE SKYLARK found a new friend yesterday. Tesco, the supermarket, teamed up with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in a £100,000 biodiversity action scheme to provide one of Britain's most favourite birds with more protection. A moving press release spoke of the decline in skylark numbers — down 58 per cent in the last 25 years — and the need to reform the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). But hold on. Aren't the big supermarkets part of the problem? Aren't they just as responsible as CAP in pushing agrobusinesses? Indeed they have been. They are both to blame for the way farming became intensified — hedges grubbed out, wild plants and insects chemically eradicated, less winter stubble — making the countryside much less bird friendly. Our arable land produced much bigger crop yields but at a huge cost to nature. Earlier this year two government conservation agencies joined the RSPB in producing a follow-up report to Rachel Carson's epic book, Silent Spring, published 35 years ago on the effects of chemicals applied to the land. The chemicals continue — weedkillers, fungicides, slug killers, insecticides and growth regulators. The result is a huge decline in bird numbers as nesting sites have been lost and food supplies dried up through insecticides and weedkillers.

So what's the RSPB up to? It's all part of the new "company of partners", under which environmental groups team up with businesses to promote more sustainable development. Tesco's adoption of the skylark is just a start. The RSPB has a long list of other threatened birds needing sponsors. It's a useful exercise so long as all parties understand that sustainable development will not be achieved by a few hundred thousand pounds. Saving the Earth will be much more expensive.



Letters to the Editor

McLibel's food for thought

THE cost and length of the McLibel case argue forcefully for the need to take a long view of the civil-justice reforms proposed by Lord Woolf: they must go ahead (Leader, June 20). One can tinker until doomsday with legal aid, but few savings will be achieved as long as it continues to fund our ageing Rolls Royce of a legal system. The Government needs to acknowledge that there is no alternative to Woolf, and that we cannot continue as we are.

The current review of the Woolf proposals and legal aid by Sir Peter Middleton needs to look at how to implement Woolf, not whether to do it. Sir Peter's considerable economic expertise should be brought to bear to find the money to implement them.

Ruth Evans.
Director,
National Consumer Council.
20 Grosvenor Gardens,
London SW1W 0DH.

ONE of the many things that the McLibel trial has established is that the conditions of both battery hens and broiler chickens involve the birds suffering. This is not because individual farmers are cruel, but because the systems themselves do not meet the birds' psychological or physiological needs.

The Protection of Birds Act 1954 makes it illegal for birds to be kept in cages that prevent them from stretching their wings freely. However, in a blatant example of profits being put first, poultry are specifically excepted from this part of the Act. The overcrowding in broiler sheds encourages the birds to attack each other. Instead of recognising that the system needs change, many farmers mutilate the birds to prevent them inflicting too much damage.

The McLibel verdict found that McDonald's was "culpably responsible" for the cruelty involved in the rearing of these birds. I would argue that any individual who buys chicken or eggs that are not free-range is just as much to blame.

Richard Mountford.
76 Springfield Road,
Birmingham B14 7DY.

Wee fees

PROFESSOR J W M Chapman (Letters, June 20) tries to make the point that searching for ancestors in Edinburgh is expensive whereas access to records in London is free. But he is not comparing like with like.

At New Register House in Edinburgh, the daily fee of £17 includes access to a computerised facility for searching the indices of births, deaths and marriages, avoiding the tedious and time-consuming need to carry and peruse many large books of indices. The searcher in Scotland is also able immediately to inspect the original certificates on microfilm and to note relevant details.

In London, while the indices can be searched for free, one then has to pay a fee of £6 for each certificate and wait a week or so until the certificate arrives by post.

Hugh Hoffman.
Hoffman Research Company,
64 Commercial Road,
Ladybank, Fife KY15 7JS.

DEATH certificates in Scotland, and not in England, give the names of the parents of the person deceased. It cost us £18 for two with an unlimited number of full certificates viewed and copied in one day. We traced the family back to the 18th century with a lot of branches discovered. I always thought that it was good value to be Scottish.

Laurence Robb.
51 High Street,
Saltford, Bristol BS18 3EJ.

A judgment that moved mountains

THE judgment in the case brought against a British mountain guide for the benefit of six-year-old Daniel Woodroofe Hedley (Guide was negligent during fatal climb, June 21) creates a misleading picture about safety and responsibility in mountaineering.

The judgment, following a fatal accident during an ascent of the north face of the Tour Ronde in July 1990, suggests that placing two ice-screw belays and ice-screw running belays is a standard safety procedure for climbing routes of the type where the incident occurred and that this procedure is "universal" and "elementary and fundamental". This is not the case.

Depending on the conditions, any one of a number of procedures may be appropriate. Choosing the best procedure is one of the judgments made during an ascent. The judgment also supposes that if a second screw had been placed then the accident would have been prevented. This is by no means certain; where ice is of poor quality, two screws offer little more protection than one.

It was also stated that "a fall was foreseeable but the risk of stonefall was remote". Falling rocks and ice are a regular and common danger on climbs of this type and speed is the way in which exposure to this hazard is minimised, whereas a fall is a very unlikely possibility. Ice-screw anchors do not offer guaranteed security and any climber who was "foreseeing" the possibility of a fall on such a climb would not consider the route to be justifiable.

Because an accident has occurred, it does not mean that any individual is at fault. Risk is inherent in mountaineering and it cannot be eliminated, only reduced.

George Band.
President, British
Mountaineering Council.
177-179 Burton Road,
Manchester M20 2BB.

I LOST friends on the south face of Mont Blanc just before ice screws had been invented. Just one would have made the difference. But who said it is "standard practice" to use two? Sometimes it would increase protection; at other times it wouldn't. This verdict will worry serious mountaineers.

Robin Hodgkin.
(Alpine Club, Climbers Club.)
39 Holycake Road,
Headington, Oxford OX3 8AF.

THOSE who call for mountaineering to be "made safer" are missing the point. In climbing, you choose a level of technical difficulty and danger that is acceptable to you. The objective is to overcome that difficulty and danger with your skill and judgment.

Bad weather, stonefall and avalanche are unpredictable hazards that are often best minimised by speed, not by fussing over running belays. Making difficult decisions in the face of danger is an integral part of climbing in big mountains. Fatally wrong decisions are to be expected, not made the subject of legal actions. If you cannot accept this, then you should stay away from mountaineering.

Steve Miller.
30 Troarn Way,
Chudleigh,
Newton Abbot,
Devon TQ13 0FP.

BEFORE getting a guide's "ticket", the aspirant Alpine guide must go through a long period of training and gathering of experience, followed by a one-to-one assessment period in which every move is observed over a period of 14 days. It is impossible to imagine a more rigorous process. Having gone though this process, the qualified guide becomes one of a small mountaineering élite whose judgment should be questioned only by his peers.

How can a judge whose experience of such matters probably goes no further than a walk on Box Hill in June possibly be able to make a fair judgment in such a matter?

Roger Wilkinson.
20 Castle Hill,
Duffield,
Belper,
Derbyshire DE56 4EA.

ANYONE climbing in the Alps has to recognise that speed is, in itself, a major safety factor. It is not a question of being first to the top, or machismo display, but of minimising risk. Inevitably this leads to difficult decisions in the balancing of risks, some of which may, with hindsight, appear to have been wrong.

Of course the courts may have to be involved in cases of negligence, but it should not be a judge's job to second guess an experienced guide's assessment.

Ken Prandy.
15 Acorn Avenue,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge CB3 8DT.

All right, we've got this wretched Dome; now what?

NOW that we know the Millennium Exhibition is going ahead, I suggest that it be used to show how, in the new millennium, human beings might be valued for their humanity and not just for their creations. Here are several possible salons for the Pavilion.

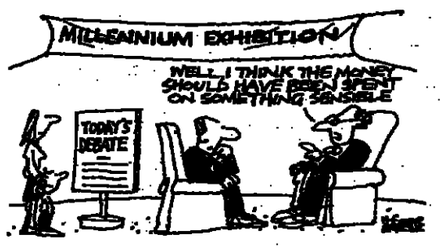
Salon 1, Room 1: The economy in the future. An assembly of posters and interactive video showing the new balance of national revenue and expenditure that is not dependent upon the sale of addictive drugs (tobacco, alcohol). *Room 2: The economy in the present.* Statistics, posters and videos of people killing themselves with addictive substances. (Noise of people coughing and puking.)

Salon 2, Room 1. Building coalitions in the future. Case histories of communities worldwide that have solved their differences through conflict resolution and non-violent communication. *Room 2: Building conflict in the present.* The arms industry. Sounds of moaning and groaning, as people grieve losses of loved ones.

Salon 3, Room 1: A reception class in a UK primary school. A class of 10 infants cared for and instructed by five adults. Diagrams showing how young people are supported by several adults and adolescents, not just their biological parents/parent. *Room 2: A reception class in a UK primary school with a class of 35 infants being taught by one adult.*

Provocative? I hope so. The challenges for the future are not technological, but moral.

Christopher Jacques.
9 High Street, Finstock,
Oxford OX7 3BY.



THE site could, alternatively, be used as the "Mother of all Garden Festivals" to celebrate British gardening at its best, with gardeners from all over the country taking part.

After the Millennium celebration, the site could then become a huge new London park and pleasure gardens; London still needs more green spaces and a park at the Greenwich Reach site would add to a long-term strategy for a "green corridor" running eastwards down the Thames.

Dan J J Kahn.
137 Norwich Row,
Parkhill Estate,
Sheffield S2 5RG.

WHY can't the revamp of the plans for the Millenium site at Greenwich incorporate ideas on what to do with it once the exhibition is over? Why not a world-leading development of sustainable and integrated housing and business communities incorporating advanced environmental technology? It could stand as a contrast to the Isle of Dogs and so demonstrate the plurality of life in London.

Jeremy Cavanagh.
68 Meadow Road,
London SW8 1PP.

Hooked by TV

THE tragic death of Lucy Burchell (Men deny killing girl prostitute with pure heroin, June 19) is an example of the power of the uncensored media, TV, newspapers, magazines etc, to corrupt and deprave. I believe it to be the tip of the iceberg. We do not know how many more young girls have been tempted into immorality and/or prostitution by television programmes such as Band of Gold.

The preservation of the freedoms of speech and expression depends upon responsibility and liability. Those responsible for the production and broadcasting of Band of Gold should be held responsible and liable for Lucy's death. Unfortunately, those responsible for the control of such programmes can only censure after the event — after the horse has bolted.

E T Worster.
21b Webster Avenue,
Wallasey L44 0EP.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters.

Gas bill

CONTRARY to the claims of B F Brown (Letters, June 21) BG is paying in full for the clean-up of the site at Greenwich to comply with the latest environmental legislation, not the taxpayer. Much of this work has already been completed at an estimated total cost to BG of £20 million. We made a further contribution in excess of £20 million towards the new Jubilee Line station on the site.

The site is no longer in the ownership of BG, having been sold earlier in the year at the then Government's request to English Partnerships, in a deal worth an estimated £28 million. The site will not, as your correspondent claims, revert to BG after the exhibition, the benefit of BG's expenditure accruing instead to the taxpayer.

Roy Dantzic.
BG Property Division.
21 Whitefriars Street,
London EC4Y 8JJ.

Editorial GBH

FIRSTLY, it is a typically anonymous backstabbing lie (Michael Jackson profile, G2, June 23) to claim that I script-edit my own work, and never more so than with Melissa, a series directed and edited by two articulate, stubborn and gifted people who — to my occasional chagrin — won every worthwhile argument.

Secondly, I am fascinated to find that your correspondent considers Melissa to have been a flop, when its audience figures, appreciation index and demographics at least equalled, from a standing start, those for the latest series of BBC2's brilliant but relatively established This Life, rightfully acclaimed as a major success only a few days ago in your newspaper.

And I thought *I* wrote fiction.

Alan Bleasdale.
Appleby,
Carnatic Road,
Liverpool L18 8BY.

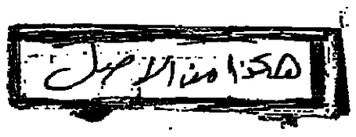
A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: The number of Heart and Dart moths appearing in the garden trap have by no means "peaked" but are now increasing with each catch. The highest count up to the time of writing these notes has been the 157 on the night of June 15. In general, overall nightly totals have been below average for this time of the year. Two very dark moths were in the trap recently, one was a totally black Peppered moth and the other a dark brown Scalloped Hazel, each being the melanic form of a normally much paler species.

The Peppered moth is the best known example of this so-called inustrial melanism, having been seen first in Manchester in 1848, but at least another 100 of our moths also have these brown/black forms. They evolved in the polluted environment of industrial areas such as those in the North-west and Midlands where they would be far less visible to predators on tree trunks blackened by burnt coal and oil particles. The Clean Air Acts of the 1960s reduced these pollution levels, resulting in a decrease in numbers of the melanic forms and studies carried out on the Peppered moth in Liverpool have revealed a 25 per cent decline.

As we move through the summer season, many of the emerging moths are bright and colourful, as beautiful as the butterflies, if not more so — the aptly named Ruby Tiger is now flying, along with the yellow Brimstone moth; the first black, white and orange Magpie moths have appeared and the petal-like, delicate pink markings of the Peach Blossom are a wonderful camouflage amongst the pale rosy flowers of the brambles where it lays its eggs.

J M THOMPSON



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Diary

Matthew Norman

WITH the party conferences approaching, a hideous etiquette conundrum looms for William Hague. When he stays at the Imperial Hotel in Blackpool in the first week of October, will he share his room with his betrothed, Ffion Jenkins, who will be there to play the doe-eyed sweetheart? Putting Ffion down the corridor would look wet and prissy; then again, having her in with him would not thrill the old trouts from Surrey. Poor William is on virgin territory here, of course, since no previous Tory leader has been in his position, and no decision has been taken. "Absolutely no idea what he'll do," says Anthony Gordon-Lennox in his office. "Call back in six weeks." With the manager of the Imperial refusing to discuss the hotel's policy on unmarried guests, perhaps William's best bet is to listen to Dr Adrian Rogers of the Conservative Family Institute. "There are many hidden advantages for couples who don't have sex before marriage," explains the doctor. "If they are both chaste, there is no risk of the transmission of any of the viruses or bacteria or flagellates which are so common." Indeed, indeed.

NEWS arrives of a splendid morale boost for the ever-troubled Express newspapers, where staff have learned of a rare victory in the battle against decay. Circulation, a memo breathlessly informs them, is "stable in Rotherham".

I AM sleepless with worry about my old friend Dr Julian Lewis. Of all the 164 Members to vote in last Thursday's third ballot, the MP for New Forest East was one of only two not to choose either candidate. This inability to make decisions must be a truly dreadful burden for a professional politician, and we will be contacting the poor lamb imminently with an offer of help. However, we may have missed the boat: a press release from a leading mental-health charity has arrived, headlined "Sane supports Julian Lewis MP". Ah well, as long as someone's looking after him.

VISITORS to Woolwich Crown Court on Friday for the Charlie Kray verdict had an entrancing glimpse down memory lane. In a canteen packed with Krays and their hangers-on, Sky crime reporter Martin Brunt was told, at the checkout, to put his wad away . . . the Kray party had stuck £100 behind the counter, and lunch was on them. Mr Brunt insisted on paying . . . and so, it seems, did others: later the canteen manageress went over and told the Krays there was "still some money in the pot". How this takes us back to the good old days, when East End streets were safe to walk . . . and what a timely reminder it is that the Kray boys was true gents wot loved their old mum, helped old ladies across the road, and only done it to their own.

AND so to another of the Blind Beggar's top clans. Stanley Johnson, Europhile father of Europhobic Telegraph enforcer Boris the Jackal, writes to his boy's rag in praise of EU efforts on behalf of the African elephant. Although this is not the first incident of its kind — Richard Moore has had a pro-Europe letter published by the editor, his anti-Brussels son Charles — it is seen as the most explosive. "Charlie never did nuttin' about his old man, ya know?" said a voice not unlike Robert de Niro in the Jackal's office yesterday. "But the Boss, hey, he ain't pleased. He don't think Stanley's showin' respect to the family, see. Respect, ya know? The Boss, he likes respect . . ."

REGARDLESS of its other failings, its worst enemy cannot criticise South West Trains over the honesty of its staff. "I must apologise for the severe overcrowding of the train today," the guard announced on a train stuck at Wimbledon station yesterday morning. "I can only conclude that South West Trains are more interested in your money than in your comfort."

Blackened prince of the governing class

Commentary

Hugo Young

ACCESSORY before the fact of Jonathan Aitken's perversion of the public interest was the man for whom the public interest is supposed to be his sacred trust. Let's get this out, before the case disappears into convenient oblivion.

The Secretary of the Cabinet, above politics and beneath chicanery, is the prince of the governing class. The present incumbent, Sir Robin Butler, materially assisted Aitken's survival by conferring on him Whitehall's highest seal of approval. This was the final act in one of the Tories' more obscure, yet insidious, achievements: the degradation of his office. A question arises: does Tony Blair have any interest in rehabilitating it?

Sir Robin was more victim than culprit in the Aitken saga. It fell to him to be the voice of the establishment belief that the minister could not possibly be guilty. When the evidence began to gather, it was to him that Aitken went with verbal and written denials of any impropriety, and he who easily believed the practised liar. Innocence was the common establishment belief right up to the end. Over the weekend, I spoke with Aitken friends and former colleagues who said they were shattered by the outcome. I didn't speak to Sir Robin, but he was far from alone in his credulity.

The reasoning, to them, was obvious. In establishment eyes, throughout 1994 when Butler was first asked questions, Aitken filled all the requirements. With his Arab connections, he was the right foil for the Jewish Malcolm Rifkind, his boss at the defence ministry. He was selling British arms and creating British jobs. He was well regarded by generals and bureaucrats for being a shrewd defence cutter as well as salesman. He knew Prince Mohammed on the telephone. How could Sir Robin imagine that any of this might be outmatched by questions from the editor of the Guardian?

Sir Robin's problem, however, was larger. He should never have been asked to judge the questions in the first place, and it's part of the scandal of the Tory approach to government that he was required to do so. Mrs Thatcher began the pattern, a violation of tradition, by telling Sir Robert Armstrong to do her dirty business in the Spycatcher case. John Major carried it on by deploying Butler as his whitewasher-in-chief of incipient sleaze. When the Prime Minister begs, it may be hard for a Cabinet Secretary not to run. That's what happened to both Armstrong and Butler. But in the process, a great office has been demeaned.

For Sir Robin gave his approval despite being wholly unequipped for judgment. As a mere mandarin, how could he know what to ask a defaulting minister, or deploy investigators to check the answers? He was a forensic void, ensconced behind a burden of proof that would always, in the British system, be impossible to discharge against a ministerial defendant.

At the very least, when the Aitken case became a question, the Attorney-General, not the Cabinet Secretary, should have done the work, as a predecessor did in the Profumo case. Admittedly, the last Attorney's behaviour in the Scott Inquiry cast doubt on his political detachment. But a lawyer is trained to test a lie, even without benefit of oath or subpoena. Chief Whips and Cabinet Secretaries, confronted by plausibility, are destined to be nothing more than hand-wringing legitimisers of people they cannot contemplate disbelieving.

So among the multiple bits of fall-out from Aitken, which gives his case an after-life in the governing system, must be counted the damage done to the once-Olympian figure at its epicentre. The system needs the Cabinet Secretary to be strong, unpolitical and beyond reproach. Against their better judgment, both the present incumbent and his predecessor became personal familiars, servants of the leader before the state, or, perhaps more exactly, reluctant to consider that there might be a conflict between the two. I don't think Sir Burke Trend (1963-73) would have soiled his hands in such ministerial excrement.

The way this issue arises in the New Labour era will, I suspect, be different. Let us be charitable and assume there are no arms-dealers in the Blair government, nor, as is verifiable, many business people whose conflicts of interest are likely to trouble the custodian, on the Prime Minister's behalf, of ministerial standards. Even so, the Cabinet Secretary needs to be as strong and independent a figure as Burke Trend used to be.

> Sir Robin Butler gave his approval though wholly unequipped for judgment. A great office has been demeaned

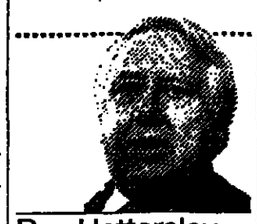
For Labour is in danger of eroding the ethos of government from another direction. It is too soon to say whether this will certainly happen. But the border-line between the worlds of politics and officialdom is already being blurred. Although it's true that the Major government deployed a lot of political advisers, the Blair government has converted more party people into mainline civil servants. It is determined not to lose the impetus for politically motivated action. It will allow nothing to get in the way of its famous mandate. It is led by a man who, though much more consensual in style than Mrs Thatcher, has in common with her an unshakable belief in the utter good sense, the incontrovertible decency, of what he is trying to do: supported by a parliamentary majority so enormous that it leaves him free, in our system of unwritten rules, to do just about anything he wants.

Against the possible perversion of this power, the Civil Service stands as one necessary bulwark, and the Secretary of the Cabinet, who is also Head of the Civil Service, should acquire a new and awkward eminence. If the standard of politics is to be revived, the restoration of the Whitehall ethic needs to happen in parallel. The two jobs, Secretary and Head, should go on being combined: when they were separated, the Prime Minister tended to lose touch with the machine he is supposed to be responsible for. Butler's successor takes over in 18 months. The name needs to bring some confidence that he will be more than Mr Blair's private place-man.

The Cabinet Secretary is the supreme insider. But, in terms of the politics of the day, he must be an outsider as well. He should be a kind of guarantor. The ancillary corruption of Aitkenism was the way it drew an entire governing class into an acquiescence they thought they couldn't avoid. They were steeped in the most scandalous complacency, which will not be dispelled by mere murmurings about bad luck.

Aitken hugely endorses the feeling that, for our own protection, we have to suspect public men of being guilty until proved otherwise. Unfair, no doubt: but a prudent working definition for any Cabinet Secretary to bear in mind.

Just one per cent on top tax wouldn't hurt



Roy Hattersley

NOBODY can be surprised by the Chancellor's discovery of a £20 billion "black hole" in the nation's long-term finances. Long before the campaign, independent analysts predicted a higher public-sector borrowing requirement than Kenneth Clarke forecast. Gordon Brown must have known that prudence would force him to raise more revenue. Yet he persisted with the promise both to hold income-tax rates at their 1996 levels and to accept his predecessor's spending plans. His friends say that freezing tax rates was forced upon him, and that by adopting the spending patterns he inherited he has saved the infant administration a bruising round of public-expenditure negotiations. But even "governments of the radical centre" cannot afford to reject both ideological and intellectual consistency.

It was never easy to understand why John Major's relative priorities deserved to be endorsed by Tony Blair. It will be even more difficult to explain why, when the income side of the national balance sheet has to be altered, the expenditure side must remain unchanged. It would be perverse for Gordon Brown to feel an obligation towards those limited parts of Kenneth Clarke's false prospectus which can still be implemented. The first Budget of a new administration is the one occasion when the Chancellor's hands should not be tied.

Regrettably there will not be an announcement that income-tax rates will be increased — right though that would be in terms of social justice. But somebody has to pay more. And if the increased burden is not to fall on industry — and undermine the drive for jobs — there is no more socially acceptable a way of raising extra revenue than an extra per cent on the top rate. There would be remarkably little political penalty to be paid for the admission that the tax promise had been made in the honourable, if naive, belief that the old government had made decent calculations.

Since, these days, everything is redeemed by the right adjective, the Chancellor could say "New Forecast. New Response". Blair must understand that he is entitled to shift his tax ground. He will not endorse an income-tax increase because he disagrees with the idea in principle. The sort of problem that persistence with that prejudice would create was illustrated by the Government's unsuccessful attempt to nudge Camelot executives into repaying part of their bonuses. The nation was outraged by the way in which the Camelot directors had exploited their position. But that is what capitalists do — particularly if they enjoy monopoly power.

All the talk of the "people's lottery" was meaningless. The same people — low-income families, mostly — finance the bonuses paid to directors of grocery chains and television-rental companies. In a free society, there is no way of stopping them doing it. Indeed, high notional salaries probably promote enterprise.

But equity requires the recipients to contribute more to society than they do now. New Labour's reservations about asking for that extra contribution — similar to old Conservative objections — are that high top tax rates both stifle initiative among those who pay them and debilitate the whole executive economy by inhibiting ambition lower down the income scale. But the Government did not seem to think that those rules applied in the case of Camelot. A government without ideological or intellectual consistency is certain to run into trouble.

If top income earners do not fill the fiscal gap, who will? And who will pay the bills that we now know to be necessary to keep the social services in good shape? Welfare to Work will save money in the long run. But for years, unless there is a benefit adjustment, the unemployed will starve two days a week. There is also virtually unanimous agreement that, without a massive cash injection, the health service will fail to fulfil the aim of treatment at the time of need irrespective of income. The "leaks" about one way of generating extra revenue illustrate another intellectual confusion that a radical government cannot afford.

Health-service charges — call-out payments for GPs' home visits or a levy to meet the "hotel costs" of hospital treatment — are not alternatives to tax increases. They *are* tax increases. There is no difference between excise duty (raising money from every bottle of whiskey), what used to be called the Road Fund Licence (levied on everyone who owns a car), and health-service charges, added to services for the sick. The distinction between public provision and private enterprise is irrelevant. Consumers (drinkers, drivers, patients) contribute to the Exchequer — to hold down the PSBR, finance essential services and prevent other people being taxed.

Traditionally indirect taxes have been levied on activities that the government wants to discourage. Calling the doctor ought not to be one of them. A government which insists that its economic policy has no ideological base has got to develop a fiscal theory that is consistent and coherent. If income-tax increases are ruled out, it is going to be difficult.

Less must be more

Tony Blair has appealed to the Americans at the UN Earth Summit to change their wasteful lifestyle. But other countries must play their part, argues Foreign Secretary **Robin Cook**: and Britain should see energy efficiency as an opportunity

THIS week the leaders of the world are meeting in New York to discuss whether they can save the Earth's climate. They last met to debate it in Rio, when the first Earth Summit sought to give impetus to international action to save the environment. Now, five years later, they have a second chance to produce a response ambitious enough to match the enormous challenge.

Miners used to take canaries down pits: the death of the bird warned that the environment was not safe for humans. In the short time since the Rio conference, 40,000 species have become extinct. Their fate warns us that the eco-system is under severe and accelerating stress.

No responsible leader at today's summit can deny that the global environment is changing profoundly. From the Arctic, where the ice sheets are melting, to the Tropics, where the rainforests are retreating, there is visible evidence of our impact on the environment.

> We are not asking Britain to wear hair shirts and live off lentils. Lower energy use is entirely compatible with a higher quality of life

In Britain, the past two years have been among the driest since records began. Global warming is no longer a scientific projection. It is happening now and here. The realisation that climate change is already upon us is pushing eco-politics centre stage in international relations. Even people who may not be aware of the scientific theory often know its consequences in increasing competition for agricultural resources or disputes between countries over access to dwindling water supplies. The environment is rising up the international agenda.

The Government is ready to provide an international lead in demanding a bold response to that new environmental agenda. Tony Blair yesterday confirmed our commitment to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent by 2010, as our contribution to the European target of 15 per cent. It is an ambitious target that will require new approaches to domestic policy.

In transport, the collapse of public transport and explosion in private car use under the Conservatives pushed up greenhouse gases and increased by two-thirds the emission of nitrogen oxide, the second-most serious source of acid rain. Labour is committed to switching the priority in transport policy to reliable, attractive public transport alternatives. In energy policy, we have inherited a prodigal waste of energy and a chronic problem of fuel poverty, which leaves pensioners at risk every winter. Labour is committed to a drive for energy efficiency and to an environmental task-force to bring energy conservation into the home. The outcome should be a better standard of comfort at a lower level of energy consumption.

None of this means that we are asking the nation to wear hair shirts and start living off lentils. A lifestyle with a lower use of energy is entirely compatible with a higher quality of life. Japan consumes much less energy than the West, but still has a higher standard of living.

Nor is there any threat to business in the requirement that it must become as efficient in its consumption of energy as it already is in its use of labour. In the next century, energy will be a scarcer resource than labour and the most competitive industries will be those already planning on that basis.

The more progressive companies have stopped regarding environmental concern as a threat and started to recognise it as an opportunity. One of the biggest markets of the future will be in the environmental technologies of resource management and pollution control. Tougher environmental standards at home will spur higher-quality products that will be in demand in export markets.

Britain has a particular strength in the financial services, and the insurance industry is increasingly alarmed about the consequences for its business of climate change. Global warming is not a happy matter of a gradual rise in temperature, but an unpredictable pattern of climatic extremes. The insurance-industry businessmen will become unlikely, but welcome, allies of environmentalists.

It is a real worry that these arguments are not having a bigger impact in North America, where the US and Canada have not cut, but increased, their output of greenhouse gases. They are not alone in their failure to meet the commitment they gave at Rio; but as they are the top nations for consumption of energy, it is hard to make meaningful cuts in greenhouse gases without their participation. This week's special session of the United Nations is an opportunity for the rest of the world to press on both countries that they must accept their large share of responsibility for global warming.

But it cannot be reversed by the rich countries alone. The pressures of poverty on the local environment are as big a threat to the global climate as the consumption patterns of the wealthy. Environmental solidarity was a key theme of the Rio contract between North and South. In return for additional aid, the poorer countries undertook to manage their environment and forests on the principles of sustainable development. Unfortunately, since Rio overall aid has shrunk, not risen.

> Sustainable management will get nowhere unless we tackle the poverty of the farmer who needs to clear land to feed his family

Labour came to power with a commitment to reverse the cuts in the aid budget. It is in Britain's own interests to do so. The poverty of landless and desperate people accounts for most of the destruction of the rainforests.

Britain will support at New York the demands for a Forestry Convention, but the principles of sustainable management will get nowhere unless we first tackle the poverty of the farmer who needs to clear more land to feed his family. The relationship between his poverty and our weather is a compelling demonstration of the interdependence of the nations that share the same globe. No country can opt out of global warming or fence in its own private climate.

Only international agreement on a common programme can stabilise the environment which we all hold in common. This week at the United Nations will reveal whether we can secure that agreement from other nations, and whether the world has the vision to face up to the task.

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Lev Kopelev

Unflinching stand against brutality

DISTINGUISHED by his long grey beard, Lev Kopelev, who has died aged 85, was frequently likened to an Old Testament prophet. A literary critic and specialist on German literature, he became famous as the model for the character Lev Rubin in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle* about a special prison camp for scientists. Kopelev had been arrested in 1945 while serving in the Red Army after protesting against the rape of German women and other brutal treatment by Soviet soldiers in East Prussia. Like Solzhenitsyn he ended up in the special Marfino camp in Moscow. Despite his initial fervent belief in communism, his experiences gradually led him to reject this.

Although he had a close association with Solzhenitsyn, the relationship was never entirely happy. Kopelev and his wife Raisa were some of the first readers of Solzhenitsyn's work and Kopelev was critical of much of it. However, it was Raisa who first handed the manuscript of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* to the journal Novy Mir, which published it in 1962. Solzhenitsyn later entrusted some of his texts to Kopelev for smuggling out of the Soviet Union but, as he rather unfairly recalled, "whenever I tried to send anything through him, it always went wrong".

Relations between the two worsened from the 1970s, with Solzhenitsyn complaining that Kopelev was "heaping abuse" on him, but claiming that he had never lost his affection for Kopelev. "Who could ever forget his huge, shaggy figure, his forthright, magnaminous impulses?"

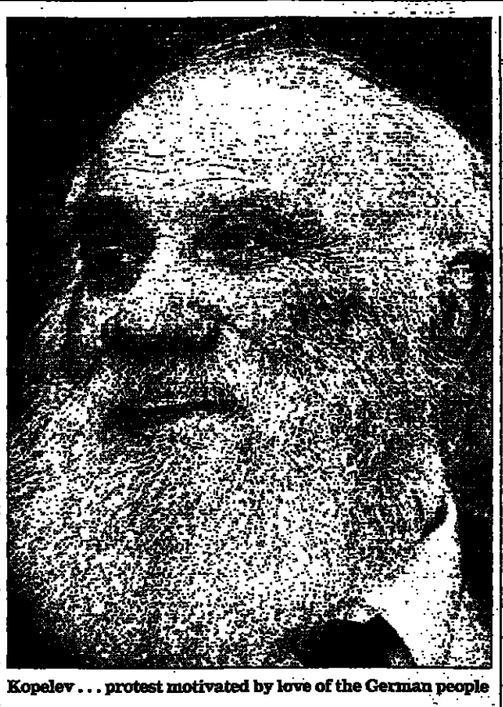
> Solzhenitsyn said, 'Who could ever forget his huge, shaggy figure, his forthright, magnaminous impulses?'

Kopelev was born into a Jewish family in Kiev, but with the Bolshevik takeover of the country became an ardent young communist. After much agonising, he avoided his bar mitzvah by pretending he was ill in an attempt to avoid censure from both the Komsomol — the Russian youth association — and his family. He spent 10 days in prison for hiding Trotskyite material when he was 16 and then began work in a Kharkov factory in 1928 before becoming a literacy teacher among workers. As a journalist he witnessed the brutality of Stalin's collectivisation campaign in his native Ukraine, though he always claimed he did not see the atrocities associated with it.

In 1933 Kopelev went to Kharkov State University to study German before transferring to the Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow in 1935 and to the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, History and Literature, where he remained until war broke out. He joined the Red Army, working in propaganda beamed at Germans, eventually reaching the rank of major and being decorated twice. His outspoken criticism of Soviet treatment of the German civilian population — motivated by his love of the German people — contrasted with Soviet anti-German propaganda, which encouraged soldiers to kill and rape Germans indiscriminately. He was arrested in April 1945 on charges of "bourgeois humanism", transported to Butyrki Prison in Moscow and eventually to the camp at Marfino. He would be freed in 1954.

After rehabilitation in 1956 and re-entry into the Communist Party, Kopelev resumed his literary career, publishing books on Goethe and Brecht. Although still a communist he began to distance himself from the actions of the regime, joining the protests against labour camp sentences imposed on the writers Sinyavsky and Daniel in 1966 and repressions against other dissidents. In 1968 he published an essay *Is Stalin's Rehabilitation Possible?* in the Vienna communist journal Tagebuch, after which he was dismissed from his job and expelled from the party.

He then began a rethink of his political views. Surviving by freelance writing and translating, he wrote a number of autobiographical volumes published in Russian and in translation in the West. *No Jail for Thought*, "an essay in confession" describing his experiences from 1945-47, was published in 1975 and *The Education of a True Believer*, covering his youth, in 1978. A third volume *Ease My Sorrows* was published in 1981.



Kopelev . . . protest motivated by love of the German people

By this stage Kopelev was already in the West. Through his friendship with German novelist Heinrich Böll (whose work he had translated and written about), Kopelev and his wife had left Moscow for West Germany on a brief visit in 1980 after receiving assurances that they would be allowed to return to Russia. This was revoked and they were forced to remain in Germany, being stripped of their Soviet citizenship the following year. Kopelev remained a close friend of Böll and worked with him on a number of books and causes.

Kopelev was married twice: his first marriage to Nadezhda ended in divorce in 1956 and two years later he married Raisa Liberson Orlova. She died in 1989. Between them they had four children.

Felix Corley

Lev Zinovievich Kopelev, writer and human rights activist, born April 9, 1912; died June 18, 1997

James Asman

Jazz crusader who spread the word

LIKE others of his generation, James Asman, who has died aged 83, took to jazz when he heard it on the wireless in the early 1930s. He went on to become a vigorous campaigner for the traditional style, his lifelong commitment encompassing magazine journalism, promotion and recordings, the championing of individual musicians, and most visibly, his James Asman jazz record shops in London.

Asman was born in Hull, but moved with his parents to Nottingham when very young. Later he formed a friendship with a Newark jazz fan, Bill "Fu" Kinnell which led them to found the Jazz Appreciation Society and to create Jazz, one of a number of "small" magazines which endured despite wartime paper shortages. Contributors included Hugues Panassie and Stanley Dance, while the staff artist was "W Fawkes", later more celebrated as cartoonist Trog. Asman, who was working nights for the Ransome & Marles company, kept up a steady flow of articles (including some "passionate jazz poetry"), waving a flag for the music he loved.

On a 1945 visit to London, Jim chanced upon the George Webb Dixielanders playing at a Home Guard dance. Immediately enthused by Webb's re-creation of King Oliver's classic style, he arranged for the band to record in Derby for the society's own Jazz label, with Wally Fawkes on clarinet. Jim admired the band's sincerity and their "intelligent interest" in the music, and persuaded Decca to give them a recording session.

> He and Dot kept open house for jazz people, hosting meals and providing help

Webb, a pianist, had started the Dixielanders in 1943, as an offshoot of the Rhythm Club in Bexleyheath, and is revered as the founding father of British revivalism. Jim Asman was the first critic to plug Webb's band and the two men stayed friends, with jazz and cricket as common enthusiasms. In truth, the Jazz recordings — on the first specialist label in Britain — were expensive and only four sides were issued before the society wound down.

After the war Jim, by now married to Dot, always his most loyal supporter, moved to London, submitting radio scripts and selling records for the Wilcox Brothers. He was on hand to round up the faithful when the Wilcoxes famously presented Sidney Bechet in an "illegal" concert with Humphrey Lyttelton in November 1949. (American artists were banned from playing here by the Musicians' Union).

Jim opened his first jazz record shop in 1953 in New Row, Covent Garden, running off "white label" pressings of rare items, such as Bill Russell's American Music label from New Orleans, allowing the premises to become a meeting place for devotees of the earthier jazz forms. A second Asman branch in the City, and then a third, followed in the late 1950s but did not survive long, as he concentrated on the New Row outlet.

Dot's niece Maureen Vernon joined him in 1962 and remembers Asman's stints as a columnist in Record Mirror and as jazz correspondent for the Daily Mirror, when "he used to write his reviews in the shop".

Jim was also involved with the National Jazz Federation, working to present British jazz bands in concert and to bring US artists over on tour, badgering Decca to release the recordings of old-time bluesmen; and always "banging the drum" for favourite performers.

Asman . . . cheerfully bulky presence at gigs PETER SILVER

He and Dot kept open house for jazz people and when George Lewis, the New Orleans clarinettist and hero of the traditionalists, came to Britain in the 1950s, the pair were there, hosting meals and providing help.

After his beloved Dot died in 1971, Jim continued to run his shop, spending every Christmas with the Webbs, and busying himself with the promotion of his "discoveries," such as the fine pianist Martin Litton and trombonist Bob Hunt, often producing their recording sessions for release on US labels. He remained a stalwart jazz booster in retirement, still possessed of a "well of positive feeling" in Digby Fairweather's words, and was a cheerfully bulky presence at gigs, particularly at London's 100 Club, especially when Litton was performing. "He's done everything for our type of music, his contribution was unbelievable," said Webb.

Mole Jazz, which purchased the New Row business, will retain the James Asman Corner at their King's Cross shop, managed, as ever, by Maureen Vernon.

Peter Vacher

James William Dudley "Jim" Asman, jazz writer and record shop proprietor, born April 18, 1914; died June 14, 1997

Letter: Lord Banks

Basil Banks writes: May I correct a small inaccuracy in your generous obituary of my brother Lord Banks (*June 19*). He was never a prisoner-of-war in Trieste but a member of the Allied Military Government (AMGOT) there at the end of the war.

In his early twenties he was active in forming a Liberal association in Kenton, Middlesex, in the late 1930s and, far more significantly, was Liberal social security representative during the operation of the Lib-Lab pact in the late 1970s. In this capacity he ensured that relevant legislation on pensions provided for company negotiation and agreement with *all* employees and not just with union representatives, which was the restricted and blinkered stance of Labour at the time.

To Desmond, all people had rights, not just those who were among the big battalions.

Birthdays

Clare Alexander, editor-in-chief, Macmillan publishers, 44; **Jeff Beck**, rock guitarist, 53; **Claude Chabrol**, film director, 67; **Robin Cutler**, director-general, Forestry Commission, 63; **Garfield Davies**, general secretary, Usdaw, 62; **Anita Desai**, novelist, 60; **Jack Dunnett**, former president, Football League, 75; **Mick Fleetwood**, rock drummer, 50; **William Gaskill**, theatre director, 67; **George Gruntz**, jazz musician, 65; **Prof Sir Fred Hoyle**, astronomer and science fiction writer, 82; **Betty Jackson**, fashion designer, 50; **Stephen Jefferies**, ballet dancer, 46; **John McCormick**, controller, BBC Scotland, 53; **Owen Paterson**, Conservative MP, 41; **Prof John Postgate**, microbiologist, 75; **Robert Reich**, economist, former US Labour Secretary, 51; **Peter Ross**, director, Solicitors Complaints Bureau, 42; **Betty Stove**, tennis player, 53; **Mary Wesley**, writer, 85; **Gerald Williams**, tennis commentator, 68.

Jeff Medlen

BECAUSE of a transmission error, the picture of the golf caddy with Nick Price in yesterday's paper was not of Jeff Medlen, the subject of the obituary, and we apologise.

Albert Rosen

'A lovely man' and a fine conductor . . . Albert Rosen with trademark cigarette

Conductor always in control

OVER the years the Wexford Festival has launched many artists, one of whom was Albert Rosen who has died aged 73. In 1965, when Rosen was one of a dozen staff conductors at the Prague National Opera, he conducted Massenet's *Don Quichotte* under the direction of Carl Ebert at Wexford. That year he also became the director of the Smetana Opera in Prague, based on the Tylovo theatre — where Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was first performed.

Rosen was a lawyer's son who grew up in Vienna. In his heart he was a Czech and a Catholic and soon moved to Prague. He was at the Prague Conservatory and the Vienna Academy, where he studied conducting under Hans Swarowsky and composition with Joseph Marx. After working in Pilsen with the Pilscu Opera, he joined the Prague Opera in 1960.

In 1972 Wexford brought Rosen back to conduct a marvellously moving performance, directed by David Pountney, of *Katya Kabanova*, then a rarity in the West. I wrote of Rosen's "firm, gentle, completely assured control" and those words epitomise his conducting over the years.

What is now the Irish National Symphony Orchestra did not have a permanent conductor until the early 1960s when the Hungarian Tibor Paul gave the orchestra a personality. He also tried to convince politicians that in continental countries to be a member of the national orchestra was at least as important as being a member of the national football team.

When Paul left in 1968 Radio Telefis Eirean — whose orchestra it is — appointed Rosen as principal conductor. He made the orchestra a cohesive body with a recognisable personality. Naturally he brought us to hear much of the Slav repertoire — Dvorak, Smetana, Jánacek — and Russians other than Tchaikovsky, even Fiser.

DURING his reign he made our orchestra into a warm-hearted, sensitive instrument, in all aspects of the repertoire. Under his own baton or under others' their playing was always a musical pleasure.

In 1981 Rosen became principal conductor of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's orchestra, while remaining principal guest conductor of the Irish orchestra. In Perth he earned himself the same sort of plaudits he had received in Ireland.

He died in Dublin, just before he was to conduct a light-hearted promenade concert, and while he was recording for Naxos a programme of unfamiliar Czech works with the National Symphony Orchestra. He died of lung cancer, of course — he never had a cigarette out of his mouth.

To his orchestra in Dublin he often seemed to be a showman, though they adored him. To his audiences he was no showman, though conductors usually are, but a dedicated musician with an overflowing musical heart who simply wanted his orchestra to communicate the music to the listeners at its very best.

If one recalls the romantic sweep of *Ma Vlast*, his extraordinary insight into *The Turn of the Screw* at Wexford in 1976, the depth of his *Jenufa* with the San Francisco Opera, the sheer exuberance of his *Bartered Bride* for Scottish Opera. It is to celebrate what in Ireland we call "a lovely man" and a fine conductor equally revered in San Diego, San Francisco, the English National Opera and Australia.

Twice married and twice divorced, he leaves a son and a daughter.

Charles Acton

Albert Rosen, conductor, born February 14, 1924; died May 23, 1997

Death Notices

NORMAN, Joe, International Brigade, died peacefully 19th June 1997, aged 89 years after a lifetime spent fighting for the rights of others. Dear father of Joseph, father-in-law of Maggie and Grandad of Juliet and Sally. Funeral service Monday 30th June 12 noon Weston-Super-Mare Crematorium. Family flowers only but donations if desired for The International Brigade Association may be sent to c/o R G Rawlings Ltd, 5 Woodlands Road, Clevedon Tel. 01275 873210

WOOD, Derek Rawlins. On 21st June 1997, peacefully at home in Lotherdale, aged 78. Beloved husband and dearest friend of Mary, much loved father of David, Clare, Pippa and Peter, devoted grandfather and father-in-law. Funeral Service and Interment will be held at Christ Church, Lotherdale on Friday 27th June at 11.30am. Family flowers only, but donations if desired to the Motor Neurone Disease Association or Kisiizi Hospital c/o Howcrofts' Funeral Services, Duckett Street, Skipton BD23 2EJ

FLETCHER, Norman and Patricia. Died together suddenly on the 19th June leaving beraft children, grandchildren and friends in abundance. Funeral Friday 27th June 2.30 at St Wilfred's Church, Harrogate. Donations to St Michael's Hospice, Harrogate.

In Memoriam

HOWARD, David. We think of you every moment, but today, 24th June, in a just world, we should be celebrating your 47th birthday. All our love, Mum and Dad.

Births

Advertisement

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Jackdaw

New scientist

DOUG Lowder did not blink for 18 hours. Instead, he stared at his computer screen. Below him a chain of glass balls dropped into the deepest hole ever drilled at the South Pole. If the balls froze in safely and functioned properly, Lowder's team would be on its way to building the world's first ice telescope — perhaps creating a whole new science. If the globes froze too quickly and shattered, or did not sink deep enough, the season, maybe even the future of his project, would be jeopardised.

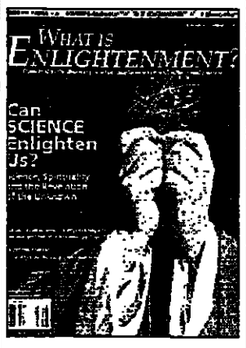
Welcome to the South Pole. Astronomy

Out of sight

STOP and close your eyes a moment. Now consider the following question; for the moment your eyes were closed did the world still exist even though you weren't conscious of it? How do you know? If this sounds like the unanswerable brain teaser your philosophy professor used to employ, you might be surprised to discover there are actually physicists at reputable universities who believe they have answered this question — and their answer, believe it or not, is no.

Now consider something even more intriguing. Imagine for a moment the history of the universe. According to data it exploded into existence some fifteen billion years ago, setting the stage for some cosmic dance of energy and light that continues to this day.

Now imagine the history of the planet Earth. An amorphous cloud of dust emerging out of that primordial fireball slowly coalesced into a solid orb, found its way into gravitational orbit around the sun, and through a complex interaction of light and gases over billions of years, generated an atmosphere and a biosphere capable not only of giving birth to, but sustaining and proliferating life.



A cosmic conundrum

Now imagine that none of the above ever happened. Consider the possibility that the entire story only existed as an abstract potential — a cosmic dream among countless other cosmic dreams — until, in that dream, life somehow evolved to the point that a conscious, sentient being became into existence. At that moment, solely because of the conscious observation of that individual, the entire universe including all of the history leading up to that point, suddenly came into being. Until that moment, nothing had actually happened. In that moment, fifteen billion years happened.

Is seeing believing asks What is Enlightenment?

Dog's life

WHAT was the most divisive issue in Edwardian London, the poll tax or motorway bypass of its day, causing fights, demonstrations, arrests, riots, burnings in effigy, letters in the *Times*, questions in the House and bitter spills within families and between friends?

It was a brown dog, or rather its statue in Battersea, erected, as the inscription put it, in memory of a terrier "done to death in the laboratories of University College London in February 1903, after having endured vivisection extending over two months." The inscription continued: "Also in the memory of the 232 dogs vivisected at the same place during the year 1902. Men and women of England, how long shall these things be?"

If only they knew. Found in New Statesman.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk.; fax 0171-713 4368; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

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What the Wise Women say, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

BT poaches Smith's boss

Lisa Buckingham
City Editor

THE trail of corporate disaster at WH Smith, the news-agency, music and book retailer, lengthened yesterday as the company admitted that its chief executive, Bill Cockburn, had been poached by BT just 18 months into a four year recovery plan.

With investors fearing that the company's revival would come to a shuddering halt, shares plunged by more than 8 per cent to 376p, the lowest since Mr Cockburn took the helm.

There was also speculation that his departure would provoke a hostile takeover bid.

But Mr Cockburn, who will become group managing director of BT, said he expected WH Smith's new-found sense of success would deter predators.

At this time last year both Boots and a supermarket group considered bidding for the company — whose mainstream business has come under assault from the likes of Tesco and Sainsbury, who are selling more books, newspapers and videos.

The collapse of the Net Book Agreement, which recommended minimum retail prices for books, has also failed to provide WH Smith with the sales breakthrough it had hoped.

Jeremy Hardie, Smith's chairman, denied that Mr Cockburn had dealt the group a body blow. "This is not disastrous. I wish he had stayed for longer because we have more to do ... But I don't think I'll have a problem getting a good list [of replacements]."

He added: "A year ago, when we were in the middle of the battlefield, any change of this magnitude would have been disastrous. We are not so vulnerable now."

It was clear that Mr Hardie was attempting to put the best gloss on what will be seen as another major setback for the group.

He noted that Mr Cockburn had sorted out some of the group's most recalcitrant problems by selling the DIY joint venture, Do It All, and Business Supplies.

But both Mr Hardie and Mr Cockburn admitted that substantial work was still needed to revive the fortunes of the core retail business.

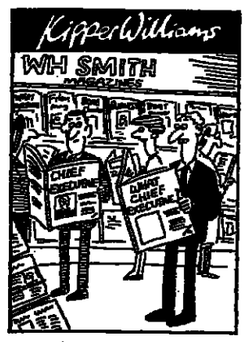
It is understood that Mr Cockburn was approached by BT only two weeks ago, and has been encouraged by Mr Hardie to reveal his appointment in an effort to avoid more damaging speculation.

The company said yesterday that second-half sales were showing a like-for-like sales growth of 3 per cent. Profits for the year to May would be in line with forecasts of between £122 million and £130 million — marking a strong turnaround from last year when, partly because of restructuring provisions, a loss was reported for the first time in the company's 204-year history.

"We have a substantial natural constituency," said Mr Hardie. "But when people come into the shops they don't want to buy. The results of our latest survey shriek that this is soluble."

Mr Cockburn, who has swept aside the old guard of management at WH Smith and denied he would have left if WH Smith faced serious problems, said it might take two to three more years before the chain makes "big gains".

Mr Hardie said WH Smith would continue to implement the programme of change started by Mr Cockburn, but denied that this would tie the hands of the new chief executive.



New chief hails from days when few people had a phone

BILL COCKBURN is a surprise choice to run British Telecom's day-to-day operations, but he has the right pedigree for the job, *writes Nicholas Bannister*.

Mr Cockburn (pictured) joined the Post Office in Glasgow as a telecommunications traffic superintendent before moving swiftly up the managerial ladder to become personal assistant to chairman Sir William Ryland when the Post Office ran Britain's telecoms services as well as the mail. He was a Post Office contemporary of BT's current chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, who succeeded him as Sir William's assistant. He subsequently became chief executive of the Post Office.

He has been appointed managing director of BT at a time when it needs a safe pair of hands after its £12 billion merger with its American partner, MCI.

BT's current chief executive, Sir Peter Bonfield, is due to become chief executive of Concert, as the merged group is to be called, with BT and MCI operating as separate entities.

Malcolm Argent, a BT non-executive director, said that Mr Cockburn had enormous experience in managing employees.

BT refused to say how much Mr Cockburn is to be paid, other than that it would be more than the £254,000 he was paid at WH Smith.

15-minute Heathrow train service expected to start price war

A HEATHROW link price war was threatened yesterday with the unveiling of the £440 million Heathrow Express rail service, expected to carry more than six million passengers a year when it opens in June 1998, *writes Keith Harper*.

The non-stop, 15 minute journey from Paddington to Heathrow, at speeds of up to 100 mph, could cost about £10. But, as the gleaming blue and grey four-car unit (above) emerged from a cloud of dry ice at its North Acton depot, Rod Hoare, Heathrow Express managing director, confirmed that no final decision would be taken until the market had been tested.

Mr Hoare said he wanted to see what impact the fare would have on rivals such as the London Underground, taxis, buses and coaches. "We expect it will cost £10 for a one-way journey, but it would be foolish to warn our competitors in advance."

The service, which could take up to 3,000 cars off the roads daily, is likely to hit taxis hardest. Charges for the 15-mile journey into central London are about £35. Mini-cab charges vary from £9.50 to £15.

The London Underground fare from the West End is £3.20, while the Heathrow Airbus, linking the airport to mainline stations, costs £6 single and £10 return. LU is increasing the frequency of Piccadilly line trains to the airport and does not expect the new rail link to affect the number of Underground users.

Passengers will get their first taste of the Heathrow Express in the autumn. For £5 they will be able to travel from Paddington to a temporary station near the airport while the route is being completed.

Mr Hoare said that, within a year of the opening, he hoped it would be possible to issue a ticket direct from Paddington to Chicago and other international destinations. Eventually, passengers would be able to get a ticket from their home town, which would get them on the Heathrow Express, the airplane flight and back home.

Sir John Egan, chief executive of the British Airports Authority, said that by the millennium another line will be opened from St Pancras station in central London, taking 30 minutes to Heathrow.

This may appeal more to travellers because by 2003 St Pancras will provide a 2 hours 30 minute Paris service through the Channel tunnel.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Notebook

Meatier Budget is on the cards

Edited by Alex Brummer

With just over a week until the first Labour Budget in 18 years, the broad outlines of Gordon Brown's tax agenda are beginning to emerge. Having waited two months to deliver, rather than diving in straight away as he did on an independent Bank of England, the odds are on a much meatier Budget than Labour was willing to acknowledge during the election campaign.

During his current visit to the US, Tony Blair publicly raised the possibility of "green" taxes that will partly be necessary to pay for promised reductions in the rate of VAT on fuel. Strong favourites in this area are higher fuel duties, a further clampdown on company cars and perhaps some incentives for insulation.

What was certainly made clear during the campaign is that higher personal taxation is off the agenda, notwithstanding the so-called £20 billion, five-year gap in the public finances. However, as Pam Meadows argues on these pages today (see page 19), the Government will eventually have to look at the whole issue of independent taxation if it is to sensibly advance the welfare-to-work debate, which is being examined by the commission headed by Martin Taylor of Barclays.

The promise not to fiddle with personal taxation may also have led the Chancellor away from abolition of Miras — the tax relief on mortgages — to a tax on transactions in the housing market: a much tougher stamp duty regime similar to that in Europe.

The windfall tax now looks as if it will be more all-encompassing than some people in the business community had hoped. A minimalist tax focused on the public utilities, raising £3 billion or so, seems likely to be overtaken by a more broadly based tax on privatised companies, including Railtrack, which will raise £5 billion and upwards with the aim of putting up to a quarter of a million young people in work.

The other great banker in the upcoming Budget is deemed to be abolition of advance corporation tax on dividends. This is seen by some financial experts, including Janette Rutterford, as a painless way of raising as much as £5 billion, all the better in that it was the Tories who first began to chip away at this. The counter argument is that this is a return to the double taxation of dividends, which it was engineered to eliminate. Either way, it is seen as relatively painless, except for an inflated stock market, and doesn't breach Tony Blair's request that the public put its trust in Labour.

Mr Brown knows that if he is to bring probity to the public finances and to start switching the emphasis of the taxation system to encourage longer-term thinking about the economy, he needs to act early and decisively: there will be much more to think about this Wimbledon than whether Tim Henman has made the second week.

Smith's deserter

IT IS hard to argue with Bill Cockburn's decision to move from WH Smith to British Telecom. It is an altogether bigger job in a more exciting world on a larger global stage. Oh, and it pays quite well too.

But shareholders in the hard-pressed retailer may feel aggrieved. Mr Cockburn joined just 18 months back on a promise that he would overhaul Smiths and would revive its fortunes. Investors were told they should not judge him for four years — for that was always how long he said the renaissance would take. So he has largely escaped the pressure which many retail bosses would have experienced if their shares had underperformed rivals so significantly for so long.

He has sold off badly performing dogs like Do It All and Business Supplies — but those decisions were obvious, it was a question only of how much the withdrawal would cost Smith's shareholders. Other brands such as Virgin Our Price and Waterstones have always looked classy.

But the group's enduring problem is the increasingly lacklustre performance of its core high street chain, faced with aggressive moves into its book, video and magazine heartland by the supermarkets. And this is the bit of the business to which Mr Cockburn has only just turned his attention with the appointment of Beverley Hodson.

Shareholders will just have to hope that Mr Cockburn was showing uncharacteristic modesty when he outlined his initial recovery timeframe.

Scottish quakes

LIFE inside Standard Life is looking distinctly fragile. For the second time in a year, a youthful and widely respected executive — in this case, the chief investment manager John Thomson — is leaving without proper explanation. His departure comes some 12 months after Mr Thomson stepped up to replace John Barfield who also departed, rather enigmatically, at 49-years-old. None of this would matter too much were the Scottish financial group at full strength. But in recent times, Scottish Amicable has been swallowed by the Prudential and there has been turmoil at fund manager Ivory & Sime.

Recognising the changes in the marketplace, Mr Thomson has been among those seeking to move the Standard brand beyond life assurance to broader financial services. Like his predecessor he has been stopped in his tracks: the festering dispute may leave even this august house vulnerable to ownership changes.

Report into NatWest Markets rules out widespread collusion

Scandal confined to small group, write **Lisa Buckingham** and **Roger Cowe**

A SMALL knot of employees was actively involved in the options mispricing scandal that has cost NatWest Markets about £90 million, an independent report to be published in the next few days will reveal.

It is understood the Coopers & Lybrand investigation has ruled out widespread collusion between executives and Kyricos Papouis, the trader at the centre of the affair.

But several individuals are understood to have known what was going on and to have been directly involved in the mispricing of option contracts, which took place, unnoticed by senior directors, for about two years.

The results of the three-month-long investigation are expected to be released later this week but insiders said it was not likely that there would be any more suspensions or dismissals.

Five executives in addition to Mr Papouis have been suspended and Martin Owen, the head of NatWest Markets, resigned last week as the bank's problems mounted.

A number of other employees at NatWest Markets are thought likely to be disciplined but the sanctions against them will fall short of dismissal. And the investment banking group — where NatWest's chief executive, Derek Wanless, has temporarily replaced Mr Owen — wants to detail the steps it has taken to address the broad areas of failure thrown up by C&L's investigation.

Not only has morale at NatWest Markets been badly dented by the control failings the options disaster threw up, but the management time involved in sorting it out has had a significant impact on performance.

Quite aside from the cost of the scandal, NatWest Markets' first-half profits are predicted to be "significantly lower" than last year and large enough to hold the entire group's profits to only £770 million.

Management is keen to draw a line under the embarrassing saga that has exacerbated the wider difficulties of its parent, which is regarded as strategically becalmed and is now seen as a potential takeover victim.

NatWest shares soared yesterday morning on takeover hopes, rising 36p to 782½p. But expectations of an early merger or bid were played down as the City considered the difficulty of mounting a hostile bid.

Some observers believe, however, that NatWest will fend off criticism by sacrificing its chairman and chief executive and bringing in new management at the top.

"There will be a change of top management and that will be enough to deflect criticism for a couple of years", said one seasoned bank analyst. He regards NatWest as being too large for most European institutions, which might otherwise welcome the chance to buy a substantial presence in the UK.

A second analyst gave chairman Lord Alexander and chief executive Derek Wanless at least six months to prove they were making progress.

Barclays' refusal to dismiss the suggestion that it wanted a merger with NatWest fed hopes of a giant combination of the two large clearing banks. But the likelihood of a successful deal was seen as remote.

A combination of the two banks to create a £30 billion institution would almost certainly be referred to the Monopolies Commission. Only a consortium bid, which could include the pre-sale of parts of the NatWest empire, could avoid such a referral, but NatWest is unlikely to agree to such a break-up. And Barclays is seen as loathe to mount a hostile takeover of its long-standing rival.

Lab is not ab fab for Harvey Nicks

Roger Cowe

THE wealthy shoppers who normally flock to the flagship of the Ab Fab clique, Harvey Nichols in London's Knightsbridge, like to stand out from the crowd with their extravagance.

However, this time it's different: the rest of the nation may be shopping till they drop but they are not.

Princess Diana's favourite department store, reporting its first annual results yesterday after floating on the stock market last year, said customers may have taken fright at the onset of a Labour government.

Its chief executive, Joseph Wan, said sales in the first 10 weeks of the new year were only 3 per cent higher than in 1996. He said this was partly due to very strong sales at the same time last year, but he admitted that shoppers had been giving the store a miss since May 1. "Sales were quite strong in April but not in May," he said.

He said political uncertainty might have led shoppers to stay away, while the weather could also be a factor.

Despite the post-election disappointment the company reported a strong performance.

Total sales so far this year have been 15 per cent up on last year, because of the new store in Leeds and the restaurant in the Oxo Tower, both opened last year.

Mr Wan said both openings had been successful and were now profitable. They would repay the cash investment in three years, as planned, and would be followed by further expansion.

The company, which is half-owned by the Hong Kong luxury goods business Dickson Concepts, is pressing ahead with plans for stores in Scotland and Manchester.

Harvey Nichols also plans several restaurants in London sites similar to the Oxo Tower, but expects the search for such sites to take some time.

Standard hit as manager quits

Ian King

STANDARD Life, one of Britain's biggest fund managers, suffered a blow to its expansion plans yesterday when John Thomson, its chief investment manager, left his £300,000-a-year job after less than a year.

Mr Thomson, who replaced Dick Barfield last July, is thought to have had a row over company strategy.

Standard Life, which manages over £52 billion in funds, played down the dispute. But market sources said Mr Thomson's seniority and length of service — he had been with the company for 15 years — suggested the row was serious.

It is thought that Mr Thomson was unhappy at Standard Life's failure to establish a fund management operation to compete with groups like Mercury Asset Management.

The company has been trying to build up an investment management operation to meet the demand for financial products, like unit trusts and Peps, against its traditional life insurance products.

But to achieve this Mr Thomson is understood to have felt that Standard — renowned for its conservative business approach — should have converted its investment department into a separate company, as its rival Scottish Amicable did.

Fiercely committed to mutuality, Standard Life also applied for a banking licence last month.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.14	France 9.363	Italy 2,796	Singapore 2.313
Austria 19.565	Germany 2.779	Malta 0.62	South Africa 7.236
Belgium 57.39	Greece 441.50	Netherlands 3.116	Spain 233.30
Canada 2.243	Hong Kong 12.45	New Zealand 2.352	Sweden 12.48
Cyprus 0.814	India 59.22	Norway 11.685	Switzerland 2.317
Denmark 10.859	Ireland 1.065	Portugal 280.00	Turkey 233,410
Finland 8.388	Israel 5.67	Saudi Arabia 6.10	USA 1.619

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

The Guardian Tuesday June 24 1997

Separate taxation for wives is a boon for Islington woman and her husband — but not for jobless families, the Guardian's economics panel advises the Chancellor as his first Budget looms

Middle-class couple made good . . . Taxing husbands and wives independently was good for women wanting financial privacy but benefited professional two-income households at the expense of the poor PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

It pays to be middle class

PAMELA MEADOWS on the unexpected legacy of Lawson's 'feminist' measure

SEPARATE taxation of husbands and wives, hailed as a move towards equality when it was introduced by Nigel Lawson in 1991, has probably increased inequality. It has benefited middle-class couples who both work at the expense of poorer households where nobody has a job.

Over the past 20 years the traditional single-earner family has declined. Households are increasingly likely to have both adults in work or to have no one earning.

Some of the polarisation between the work-rich and work-poor is linked to the fact that more adults live alone, but it has been reinforced by the tax system.

A second earner gets a full personal allowance before paying any tax on earnings. That means that a couple with one partner earning £9,000 a year and the other earning £4,000 a year are about £1,200 better off than a couple with a single income of £13,000 a year.

The National Insurance system reinforces this bias. Those earning below the lower limit (now £62 a week) pay no contributions and neither do their employers. Those earning above that figure pay only 2 per cent on the first £62 and their employers pay a reduced rate on a sliding scale on all earnings below £210 a week.

That means that an employer with a task requiring 40 hours' work a week at £4 an hour would pay £11.20 a week National Insurance for a full-timer, and £4.80 for two part-timers. The full-timer would pay £11.04 employee's contributions while the part-timers would pay £3.04 each.

This has led to a situation where it is increasingly difficult for workless households to escape from the benefit system. The pool of full-time jobs on offer is reduced because employers favour part-time work. Instead of finding jobs offering £160 a week — hardly a fortune but an aspiration for many — they are faced with part-time jobs offering only £80 a week.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is keen to ensure that the tax and benefits systems provide a bridge back into work. The reform of income tax and National Insurance could contribute to that, and simultaneously produce a redistribution from better off to poorer households.

In the case of National Insurance, the solution is clear: it should be paid at the same rate on every pound earned. This would reduce the incentive to employers to create part-time jobs rather than full-time ones.

As far as income tax is concerned, the issues are more complex. The ideal solution would be to return to treating the family as the tax unit, as other tax systems, most notably the United States, do.

However, the complication is that the move to independent taxation was driven by the sense of outrage felt by many women, particularly middle-class professionals, that they could not keep their financial affairs private from their husbands.

If ending independent taxation proves too bold, we should allow unemployed couples to pool their tax allowances. That would mean that someone moving from unemployment into work, where a partner was not working, could earn at least £155 a week before paying any tax. If the partner then got a job, each would revert to their own allowance.

Such a move would be a second-best solution but would help to reduce unemployment and eliminate the worst of the inequity introduced in the name of equality.

Pamela Meadows is the director of the Policy Studies Institute

Should Gordon Brown claw back £6bn in tax refunds?

YES

Treasury will benefit and share prices will not fall in the long term, argues JANETTE RUTTERFORD

THE Government is paying out £6 billion in tax refunds to pension funds. This relief on advance corporation tax (ACT) should be a target for cost cutters.

The tax system is designed to make shareholders indifferent as to whether they receive profits through dividends or capital gains from retained profits. In practice, this only works if investors pay tax at the ACT rate, now 20 per cent.

Pension funds, now the most important investor group, stand to gain more if the company pays out a dividend than if it retains its profits. As they are tax exempt, they can claim back the ACT.

No wonder that UK companies top the global dividend yield tables. The corporate tax system positively encourages payouts.

The solution is to remove the refund for tax-exempt shareholders, while keeping the ACT tax credit for ordinary rate shareholders.

Opponents of this course argue that, if the Government abolishes ACT relief or refunds, share prices will fall. But they are confusing how shares are valued by actuaries for pension funds with how shares are priced in the stock market.

Actuaries value shares as the sum of all future dividends. So, what is important to share values, according to actuaries, is dividend yield and dividend growth. If the Government were to abolish ACT refunds, actuaries would mark down pension fund assets and could ask companies to increase pension contributions or make even higher dividends to compensate.

But shares are not valued in stock markets so simply. Investors look at the return companies can earn, and do not just view shares as an income stream.

So, long-term share prices would not fall if ACT refunds were abolished. Short term pressure on pension funds could be ameliorated by an approach to the actuarial profession.

Janette Rutterford is managing director of Unique Consultants

NO

Don't be fooled, millions will be hit hard through the impact on pension funds, argues ANN ROBINSON

THE Chancellor could raise revenue from making a change to advance corporation tax (ACT), it has been said, without anyone noticing that it means extra tax on their own incomes. That may well be true because corporation tax appears simply to be a tax on companies.

In fact it is largely a form of income tax on shareholders' funds. Changes to corporation tax mean changes to the tax on the income of millions of people.

Pension funds and other exempt bodies such as charities do not pay tax on their income. Pension funds do not pay income tax on investment income from property and government securities, and only partially on dividends. Nor do they pay capital gains tax. The reason why they pay no tax is that pension funds are held in trust for individuals who will have to pay tax when eventually the pension income is received.

It is for this reason that pension funds can claim a credit against ACT. Pension funds cannot, however, claim back the tax paid on undistributed profits. This is how the charge of "bias" arises.

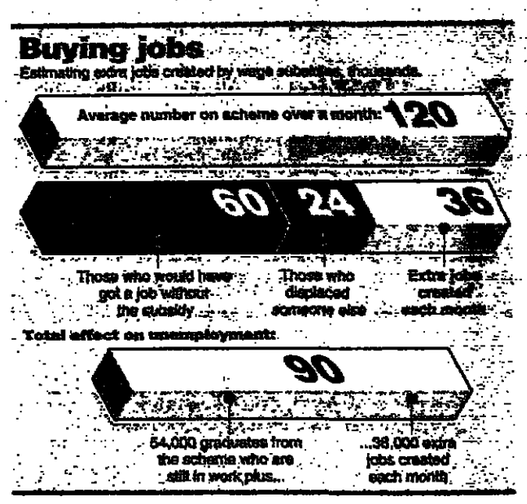
But pension funds do not stand over companies demanding dividend payments. They are long-term investors staying with leading companies for decades.

If the Chancellor believes the system does not ensure that UK companies fail to invest sufficiently for their long-term health he has first to ask himself whether a greater proportion of retained profits for companies would do the trick. If he believes this is the answer there are several policy routes he could take. He could alter the balance between distributed and undistributed profits by changing the nature of corporation tax, ie, returning to the classical system and separating it completely from income tax on shareholder funds.

If the Chancellor fudges the issue simply by abolishing or reducing ACT he will need to come up front to make it clear that investment in companies carries a higher rate of tax than investment in property or government bonds.

Ann Robinson is the director general of the National Association of Pension Funds

Welfare to work is cheap at £3bn



PENELOPE ROWLATT finds £60 subsidy to put young to work will save the taxpayer money

THE Government's plan to spend some £3 billion of windfall tax proceeds on a welfare-to-work programme for young people could save the Exchequer money in the long run.

Employers offering work to these young people will be able to claim a £60 per week subsidy. There is an up-front cost in providing the subsidy but, if the plan creates extra jobs, it could cut the benefits bill.

Suppose 240,000 young people join the pool of the unemployed during any one year and are accepted on to the scheme. Each person in subsidised employment costs the Exchequer the subsidy plus administration costs of around £5 per week. The total cost is £406 million assuming they remain in the job for the full six months.

At first glance, it appears that having these young people in work saves more money than the £60 weekly subsidy costs. The Jobseekers' Allowance and other benefits no longer need to be paid, saving an average of around £76 per week per person. The employed person saps an estimated £31 per week more in tax, making total savings of £107 per person per week.

But some of the subsidies will clearly be unnecessary, going to people who would have found work without their employer receiving £60 a week. From similar schemes in this country and elsewhere, we estimate that around 50 per cent of the scheme's beneficiaries would have got their job without the subsidy.

A further group will win work at the expense of someone already in a job — with employers laying off workers to take on young people they can claim a subsidy for. We estimate around 20 per cent of the people on the scheme will merely replace other workers, who become unemployed in their stead.

That means 30 per cent of the people benefiting from the scheme would be "extra" — and create savings for the Exchequer.

Although this proportion might seem low, many of those who pass through the scheme will still be in work in future years, where without the scheme they might have joined the long-term unemployed.

We assume (see graphic) that 90 per cent of those who have benefited from the scheme in the past and are in employment at the beginning of a month will still be in employment at the beginning of the next month. These numbers cumulate in the early years of the scheme and reach 54,000 in the longer term.

If these assumptions are correct then the scheme, although costing the Government around £120 million to run in the first year, would start to make savings from the next year, building up to annual savings of £100 million after year three.

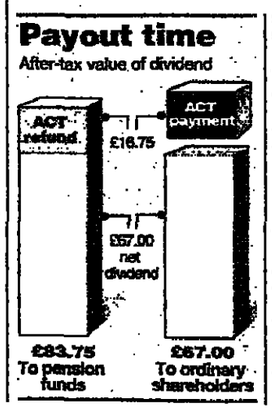
However, there are other considerations which will determine whether the scheme pays for itself. Unemployment responds to a great variety of factors, from interest rate changes through to fiscal changes implemented after the Chancellor's budgets.

If the scheme causes unemployment to decline there might be a risk of upward pressure on inflation.

By giving work to young unemployed people, and turning them into participants in the working economy rather than long-term unemployed, the scheme may reduce the pool of those who have no impact on inflation. If the scheme is able to do better than break even, and to keep 90,000 people in work who would otherwise have been unemployed long term, it should be considered very successful.

Penelope Rowlatt is director of National Economic Research Associates

So what is advance corporation tax?



SUPPOSE a company makes £100 in profit. Its tax bill on this profit is £33 (33 per cent of £100) leaving £67 available either to pay out to shareholders as a dividend or to retain and invest, *writes Charlotte Denny*.

When a company pays out a dividend, it settles its tax bill in two parts. The first part, advance corporation tax, counts towards settling the company's corporation tax bill, but is also credited towards the tax bill of the shareholders on their dividend income.

It sounds complex but the point is to avoid taxing shareholders twice, once through corporation tax on the company's profits and again through taxing the dividends paid out from this profit.

If there were no ACT system, investors would encourage companies to retain profits rather than pay out dividends — because the after-tax value of the dividend to shareholders is lower than the capital gain they would make if the company retained the earnings for investment.

ACT is levied at 20 per cent of the gross dividend payment, which is where things get tricky. The gross dividend is the net dividend plus the ACT payment. (See table.)

For basic rate and lower tax payers, the ACT payment made by the company covers their tax bill on dividend income. They receive their dividend net of tax, and do not owe the Revenue any more money. Higher rate taxpayers owe a further 20 per cent.

However pension funds and PEP schemes are tax-exempt, and are entitled to claim the ACT payment which the company has already made back from the Revenue. The effect of this tax credit is that profits are worth more to the pension funds if the company pays them out as a dividend (because part of the company's tax bill gets refunded to the tax-exempt shareholders) than if the company holds on to the profits and invests them.

Guardian

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Rugby League

World Club Championship

Canterbury Bulldogs 34, London Broncos 18

Currie hails big London comeback

Greg Francis

THIS was their third defeat in Australia, but the London Broncos gave their best performance in losing by five tries to four against the Bulldogs, who were flattered by the margin of victory at Belmore Stadium yesterday.

The London players will also feel, as Wigan's did last week in Brisbane, that they were given the rawest of deals by the inconsistent Sydney referee, Bill Harrigan.

Although the referee was not responsible for their defeat, London's players could never be quite sure when, or for what, Harrigan would punish them next. Even so they could have won despite him had they been a fraction tighter in defence — two of the home tries came from high kicks to Martin Offiah's wing and another from a "bomb" downfield — and less careless on attack.

Goal-kicking was another factor. Darryl Halligan landed all seven of his attempts while Terry Matterson managed only one of four kicks.

"It was a pretty good turnaround from a 66-6 defeat at the hands of Canberra," said London's coach Tony Currie. "They scored three tries from bombs and, with Darryl Halligan the super boot that he is, that was 18 points. We were a little unfortunate that Terry couldn't put the crucial ones over that would have made the score close and fired my guys up even more."

Currie could take heart from some excellent individual performances, notably from Tulsen Tollett, Shaun Edwards, Peter Gill and, not least, Tony Martin, the teenaged back who is developing into a fine player. There was, too, sufficient collective resolve to justify Currie's prediction that they will reverse the result "big time" in next month's return match at The Stoop.

The Bulldogs led 20-4 at the interval through two tries from Jason Hetherington and one from the outstanding winger Hazem El Masri to a try from David Krause.

London's best spell came in the opening 15 minutes of the second half when Offiah and Scott Roskell went over.

Edwards, who got his reward with a late try, said: "I thought we showed a lot of pride in ourselves, compared to some of the other English teams." Canterbury's win was the 26th by Australasian clubs in the pool matches, against three for Europe.

The Canterbury coach Chris Anderson, who was a great success at Halifax in the mid-Eighties, said: "The British game needs some fresh coaching ideas. Bradford is showing the way with its infrastructure — modelled on Australian clubs."

Canterbury Bulldogs: Ryan; El Masri, Marteena, Timu, Halligan; Polla-Mounter, McRae; Newton, Hetherington, Price, Gillies, Relf, Norton. **Substitutes:** Pickering, Ward, Berrigan, Hammond.

London Broncos: Tollett; Roskell, Martin, Krause, Offiah; Edwards, White; Mestrov, Beazley, Salter, Gill, Rosolen, Matterson. **Substitutes:** Bawden, Dunford, Spencer, Hamilton.

Referee: W Harrigan (Sydney).

Collared at Belmore . . . the Broncos' flying winger Martin Offiah has his charge arrested by a Bulldog grip

Racing

Entrepreneur not ready for Irish Derby

Ken Oliver

ENTREPRENEUR, who disappointed when 6-4 on and only fourth in the Derby, will not attempt to redeem his reputation in the Irish equivalent at The Curragh on Sunday.

Michael Stoute, the colt's trainer, said yesterday: "Entrepreneur will not run in the Irish Derby. He returned from Epsom with a right-side hamstring strain. Intensive physiotherapy enabled him to resume cantering at the weekend but he is not at peak fitness for The Curragh.

"I can now confirm that all other tests were negative. When his owners and I have decided on his next intended race, an announcement will be made."

Entrepreneur's part owner, Michael Tabor, may now supplement his Irish 1,000 Guineas runner-up Strawberry Roan, trained in Ireland by Aidan O'Brien, for the race.

Windsor Castle, winner of the Group Three Queen's Vase at Royal Ascot last week, looks a handicap snip with only 7st 12lb for Saturday's Newcastle Brown Ale Northumberland Plate.

The three-year-old is favourite in all ante-post lists with 4-1 the top price with Ladbrokes and William Hill but a decision on him running will not be taken until Thursday.

Paul Cole, the colt's trainer, said: "The Ascot race was only a few days ago and we will have to wait to see how he is. I would like to run him because there is a big pot at Newcastle. He is well handicapped and I will decide on Thursday."

The Tote Jackpot could reach £¼ million at Warwick today after yesterday's pool at Nottingham was only part won (£35,751) with £453,193 carried over.

Rob Hartnett, the Tote's spokesman, said: "The 10p winning line came via Tote Direct through a Tote Bookmakers shop in Walsall. The winner invested only £6.40."

Bryan McMahon, the Tamworth trainer, and jockey Lee Newton took the honours at Nottingham when combining for a 220-1 double with Tonnerre and Superbit.

The pair, who had teamed up to win with The Happy Fox at Wolverhampton on Saturday night, set up the brace when Tonnerre took the Sun Chemical Handicap Stakes.

Leading with two and a half furlongs to race, Tonnerre, who has done most of his racing at a mile and six, stayed on to hold Hill Farm Blues by a length and a half.

Superbit, carrying top weight of 10st, made all the running in the Miles 33 Handicap to beat Aquatic Queen by two lengths, giving Newton his 11th winner of the season and equalling his personal best set last year.

Unpenalised Cavalier can have the last laugh for Hollinshead

Ken Oliver

A SHREWD oldie and an up-an-coming youngster could prove the perfect blend at Warwick this afternoon.

Reg Hollinshead certainly knows a good apprentice when he sees one and the veteran trainer thinks a great deal of Paul Fredericks, who rides Dancing Cavalier for the Staffordshire handler in the Syd Mercer Memorial Handicap.

The combination teamed up last week at Nottingham where Dancing Cavalier returned to form in great style, winning a 14-furlong handicap by seven lengths.

As that race was for apprentice riders, Dancing Cavalier (3.15) incurs no penalty today. He is on a 6lb lower mark than his previous Nottingham victory in April and, with the soft ground again in his favour, he looks worthy of the nap to follow up.

Hollinshead enlists the talents of Frankie Dettori for Snaltach (4.45) in the Ugly Bridge Handicap.

This four-year-old is a quirky customer but is well treated on his best form and with the brilliant Italian, who has a good record on Hollinshead horses, in the saddle I think it is worth taking a chance with him.

A quick start is essential in five-furlong races at the Midlands track and Runs In The Family (2.45) should make full use of her number one draw in the Greenacres Fillies' Handicap. Graham McCourt's five-year-old is a nippy type who will appreciate the soft ground.

Crooks . . . tough decision

Knee injury forces Crooks to hang up his boots

Paul Fitzpatrick

LEE CROOKS, the Castleford Tigers and former Great Britain forward and arguably the most skilful prop of his generation, has retired.

"All good things must come to an end," said Crooks, who will be 34 in September. "It has been a tough decision, but it is good to finish at the top."

Crooks, who made his professional debut for Hull in 1980-81 and played his final game against Hunter Mariners recently, decided to go now rather than risk further problems with a long-standing knee injury. He was 19 when he made his first appearance for Britain against the 1982 Kangaroos and went on to play 19 times, a comparatively modest record for such a gifted player. During his career Crooks scored 74 tries and kicked more than 1,000 goals.

He has twice been transferred for £150,000, first when he reluctantly left Hull for Leeds in 1987 and then when he joined Castleford in 1990. He will remain at Wheldon Road in a coaching capacity.

Officials have defended the World Club Championship and insisted that better performances by British clubs are imminent. The first round, which has seen the Australian and New Zealand sides run up big scores, came to an end at Warrington last night.

Maurice Lindsay, chairman of Super League's International Board, said: "Once supporters in this country get over the disappointment following their own clubs' performances they will see a fresh determination by everyone to match the Australian standards.

"I also believe that some of our clubs will improve their performances during the second round of matches and I have not given up hope of a European side reaching the final stages.

"Rugby League in Australia has moved ahead yet again. The last time Great Britain toured Australia in 1992 we actually beat nearly every club side we played. Clearly, since the advent of Super League, standards have risen dramatically."

John Ribot, the board's vice-chairman, said standards had also improved in England, but not to the level that Super League in Australia had achieved.

"This competition has been criticised because the British sides have failed to win enough games. But we believe that the competition will help Britain in the long term as coaches and players realise the need to raise their standards."

Warwick jackpot card

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
2.15	Hoh Justice	Mysticism
2.45	Runs In The Family (nb)	Sally Slade
3.15	Dancing Cavalier (nap)	Dancing Cavalier
3.45	Sam Rockett	Sam Rockett
4.15	Bluebell Miss	Guesstimation (nap)
4.45	Snaltach	Sharp Rebuff (nb)

Left-handed track of 1⅞m with 2½f run-in; 5f track bears left after halfway. Sharp track with the emphasis on speed.

Going: Good to Soft, Good in places. ★ Denotes blinkers.

Draw: Low numbers favoured.

Long distance travellers: 2.45 Maydoro, 3.45 Advance East, 4.15 Bernard Seven, M Dods, Co. Durham, 184 miles.

Seven day winners: 3.15 Dancing Cavalier.

Blinkered first time: 4.15 Prove The Point. **Visored:** 3.45 Woodland Nymph; 4.15 Irish Fiction.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J, Jumps.

2.15 RAYNSFORD NOVICE AUCTION STAKES 2YO
7f £3,226 (15 declared)

101 (7)	D	Dauntardis (13) J Eustace 8-12	J Tate	79
102 (3)	5	Donegal Saaz (28) K McAuliffe 8-12	B R McCabe	73
103 (2)	02	Hoh Justice (16) I Balding 8-12	L Dettori	89
104 (5)		Rowlee Choice K McAuliffe 8-12	J F Egan	—
105 (15)	43	Opposition Leader (38) (BF) B Hills 8-12	D Holland	88
106 (14)	0	Persian Venture (15) B Meehan 8-12	M Tebbutt	69
107 (13)	4	Signatory (28) R Hannon 8-9	Dane O'Neill	74
108 (1)	03	Grakomo (25) N Littmoden 8-9	T G McLaughlin	87
109 (12)	61	Island Girl (23) D Arbuthnot 8-6	T Quinn	85
110 (10)	00	Latin Bay (69) P Harris 8-6	A Clark	72
111 (4)	000	Olain (15) Mrs P Dutfield 8-6	R Price	81
112 (8)	50	Catch The Rainbow (28) J G Smyth-Osbourne 8-4	T Sprake	82
113 (6)	6	Dry Lightning (17) M Bell 8-4	M Fenton	86
114 (11)		La Vizelle R Guest 8-1	J Quinn	—
115 (9)	45	Mysticism (30) C Brittain 8-1	R Ffrench (5)	●90

Betting: 9-4 Hoh Justice, 3-1 Opposition Leader, 6-1 Island Girl, 8-1 Mysticism, 10-1 Catch The Rainbow, 12-1 Dry Lightning, 14-1 Donegal Saaz, Signatory, Grakomo, Olain.

FORM GUIDE - **Hoh Justice:** Outpaced 2f out, rallied over 1f out, ran on well inside final furlong, 2nd of 12, 1¾l behind Peteyb at Bath 5f 2y mdn auct, Gd-Fm. Will do well and sure to appreciate the step up in trip. **Opposition Leader:** Ran on at one pace, 3rd of 13, 4¾l behind Shandoo at Nottingham 6f 2y mdn auct, Gd. Ran as if needs longer trip. **Signatory:** Never troubled leaders, 4th of 9, 10l behind Tipsit Boy at Warwick 6f Nov, Fm, with Donegal Saaz (gave 2lb), never near leaders, 5th of 9, btn 10l. **Grakomo:** Bred to get further, driven along halfway, stayed on inside final furlong, 3rd of 10, 3½l behind Oh Nowar Again at W'hampton (a-w) 6f 2y mdn. **Island Girl:** Prominent, led over 1f out, ran on well, won at Chepstow 6f 2y sell, Gd, beating Hoxton by a hd. **Olain:** Struggled to go pace both runs so far, including when nearest finish, 8th of 24, 10l behind Lord Kingsa at Windsor 6f 2y mdn auct (6) gl with Persian Venture (gave 4lb), started slowly, always behind, finished 16th, btn 13l. **Mysticism:** Showed good pace but disadvantaged by racing alone when led 4f, one paced closing stages, 5th of 7, 7l behind Silent Tribute at Newmarket 6f 2y mdn, Gd.

2.45 GREENACRES FILLIES' HANDICAP
5f £3,330 (15 declared)

201 (5)	162605	Sally Slade (16) (D) C Cyzer 5-10-0	G Duffield	●90
202 (15)	100660	Antonias Melody (10) S Bowring 4-10-0	S Webster ★	83
203 (3)	236-00	Another Batchworth (27) (D) E Wheeler 5-9-12	A Daly (5) ★	81
204 (8)	02-040	Shifting Time (15) (BF) I Balding 3-9-6	L Dettori	89
205 (1)	516233	Runs In The Family (16) (C) (D) G McCourt 5-8-3	D Harrison ★	86
206 (6)	00000	Maydoro (7) M Dods 4-8-0	A Clark	79
207 (4)	002000	Tymeera (10) (D) B Palling 4-8-8	T Sprake	88
208 (7)	0010-0	Faccara (51) (D) J Spearing 4-8-7	S Drowne	87
209 (12)	04-006	Stock Hill Dancer (27) B Meehan 3-8-7	M Tebbutt	85
210 (9)	005316	Sunset Harbour (12) (D) S Kettlewell 4-8-5	R Ffrench (5)	82
211 (10)	050-60	Whisper Low (118) R Hollinshead 3-8-4	F Lynch	80
212 (11)	-03020	Chief's Lady (18) J Bradley 5-7-12	J F Egan	83
213 (13)	405-60	Brefini (15) R Dickin 3-7-12	J Quinn	86
214 (2)	00-00	Bairn Alberi (11) R Hodges 4-7-10	M Adams	40
215 (14)	000-30	Brie-Lodge (10) K Bridgwater 4-7-10	J Bramhill (3) ★	75

Betting: 3-1 Shifting Time, 9-2 Runs In The Family, 5-1 Sally Slade, 10-1 Antonias Melody, Another Batchworth, Tymeera, Stock Hill Dancer, Sunset Harbour, Chief's Lady.

FORM GUIDE - **Sally Slade:** Mid-division, ridden 2f out, one pace, 5th of 12, 7l behind Polly Golightly at Goodwood 5f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Antonias Melody:** Close up stands' side over 4f, behind Grey Kingdom at York 6f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Another Batchworth:** Started slowly, recovered to race in touch until weakened 2f out, 8th of 9, 22l behind Songsheet at Folkestone 5f 3y hcap, Gd-Fm. **Shifting Time:** Hard ridden and no headway final 2f, 7th of 14, 7l behind Dayrella at Windsor 6f 3-y-o hcap, Gd-Fm. **Runs In The Family:** Always prominent, every chance over 1f out, ran on well final furlong, 3rd of 10, 2¾l behind Songsheet at Windsor 5f Stakes, Gd-Fm. **Maydoro:** Held up, always in rear, behind Castle Rosselo at Thirsk 7f hcap, Gd. **Tymeera:** Led 2f, ridden over 1f out, one pace, 7th of 14, 4½l behind Faith Alone at Leicester 6f hcap, Gd-Sft. **Faccara:** Chased leaders, weakened quickly 2f out, 14th of 15, 22l behind Leading Princess at Hamilton 5f Stakes, Sft. **Stock Hill Dancer:** Always behind, 8th of 7, 19l behind Tom White at Brighton 5f 3-y-o hcap, Fm. **Sunset Harbour:** Headway halfway, closing leaders over 1f out, not quicken, 6th of 10, 4l behind Ramsey Hope at Carlisle 5f app hcap, Fm.

3.15 SYD MERCER MEMORIAL HANDICAP
1m 6f 194yds £3,677 (13 declared)

301 (1)	2003-4	Silently (24) J King 5-10-0	R Ffrench (5)	84
302 (8)	0-4202	Pike Creek (13) I Balding 4-9-12	L Dettori	98
303 (12)	13-546	Coastal Water (16) A Newcombe 6-9-7	S Drowne	82
304 (9)	416333	Paradise Navy (16) (D) (BF) C Egerton 8-9-4	K Hughes ★	83
305 (11)	0600/0	Lime Street Blues (31) T Kadoy 6-9-2	M Fenton	—
306 (5)	4400/0	Credit Squeeze (24) R Johnson Houghton 7-9-0	M Roberts	79
307 (3)	11-001	Saleko (16) (CD) A Streeter 8-8-12	T Sprake	83
308 (13)	546091	Dancing Cavalier (6) R Hollinshead 4-8-10	P Fredericks (7)	●90
309 (7)	131126	Golden Hadeer (8) (CD) (BF) M Ryan 6-8-5	A Clark	85
310 (6)	0-0520	Sad Mad Bad (32) M Johnston 3-8-8	W J O'Connor	81
311 (4)	-30-143	Goh Sho Ko (16) (D) S Dow 4-8-5	T Quinn	85
312 (2)	534023	Ronalito (16) (BF) M Blanshard 7-7-10	J Quinn	85
313 (10)	310-51	Badsail (15) (C) N Babbage 7-7-10	M Hortes	89

Betting: 5-2 Dancing Cavalier, 4-1 Golden Hadeer, 5-1 Pike Creek, 6-1 Paradise Navy, 7-1 Badsail, 8-1 Saleko, 10-1 Ronalito.

FORM GUIDE - **Silently:** Always prominent, every chance over 1f out, one pace, 4th of 12, 6l behind Robin Clover at Kempton 1m 4f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Pike Creek:** Chased leaders, led 5f out to 4f out, every chance over 1f out, 2nd of 6, 2l behind Tranline at Newmarket 1m 7f Stakes, Gd-Sft. **Coastal Water:** Never troubled leaders, 8th of 9, 43l behind Gallopian at Warwick 1m 5f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Saleko:** Held up, effort and ridden over 2f out, stayed on to lead last stride, won at Nottingham 1m 6f hcap, Gd-Fm, beating Trawlerk by a shd. **Dancing Cavalier:** Headway 4f out, led over 2f out, soon quickened clear, won at Nottingham 1m 6f app hcap, Gd, beating Needwood Epic by 7l. **Goh Sho Ko:** Held up, hard ridden over 2f out, unable to quicken, 3rd of 9, 2l behind Siege Perilous at Sandown 1m 6f hcap, Gd. **Badsail:** Made all, ridden over 1f out, ran on well, won at Warwick 2m hcap, Gd-Fm, beating Nile Valley by 1¾l with Ronalito (gave 5lb), held up, chased winner 4f out to 3f out, soon ridden, one pace, 3rd of 6, btn 2¾l.

3.45 BLACKBRAKE PLANTATION MAIDEN HANDICAP
1m 4f 115yds £3,432 (13 declared)

401 (2)	2040-0	Lavender Della (10) M Fetherston-Godley 4-10-0	D Holland	84
402 (6)	0/50	Light Reflections (35) P Murphy 4-9-9	S Drowne	81
403 (4)	003-65	Passing Strangers (32) P Harris 4-9-6	C Lowther (7)	85
404 (8)	230362	Jean Pierre (22) J Pearce 4-9-6	L Dettori	88
405 (1)	340-54	Aztec Flyer (69) C Brittain 4-8-3	M Roberts	86
406 (7)	000-00	Persian Butterfly (15) R Savage 5-9-3	D R McCabe	79
407 (11)	004332	Sam Rockett (10) Gay Kelleway 4-9-0	T Quinn	●90
408 (5)	-60064	Advance East (4) M Dods 5-8-0	A Clark	75
409 (10)	2343/4	Schnozzle (29) K Bridgwater 6-8-12	T Sprake	83
410 (9)	0000	Victor Blum (22) C Horgan 4-8-11	Paul Eddery	89
411 (12)	55-66	Treis (14) B Smart 3-8-9	S Sanders	77
412 (13)	532005	Woodland Nymph (8) D Murray Smith 3-8-8	D Harrison ★	77
413 (3)	4/00-0	Impetuous Lady (22) W Musson 4-8-8	J Quinn	83

Betting: 11-4 Sam Rockett, 7-2 Jean Pierre, 9-2 Aztec Flyer, 8-1 Woodland Nymph, 8-1 Passing Strangers, Schnozzle, 10-1 Lavender Della, Advance East.

FORM GUIDE - **Light Reflections:** Never dangerous, 9th of 12, 37l behind Solo Mio at Bath 1m 2f mdn, Gd-Sft. **Passing Strangers:** Close up until ridden and weakened over 1f out, 6th of 8, 8l behind Road Racer at Pontefract 1m 4f hcap, Gd. **Jean Pierre:** Tracked leaders, effort 3f out, kept on, not pace of winner, 2nd of 3, 4l behind Quezon City at Hamilton 1m 4f Stakes, Gd-Fm. **Aztec Flyer:** Good headway final 3f, kept on, 4th of 18, 10l behind Kinnescash at Leicester 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Sft. **Persian Butterfly:** Never reached leaders, 7th of 16, 8l behind Blush at Windsor 1m 4f claim, Gd-Fm. **Sam Rockett:** Always prominent, led 2f out, ridden wide final furlong, headed close home, 2nd of 13, hd behind Zamalek at Lingfield 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Fm, with Lavender Della, never nearer, 8th of 13, btn 5l. **Advance East:** Headway entering straight, hard driven, soon beaten, 4th, 7l behind Ledgendry Line at Ayr 1m 5f mdn hcap, Gd.

4.15 GAVESTON SELLING STAKES
1m 2f 169yds £1,985 (13 declared)

501 (7)	000000	Bernard Seven (7) M Dods 5-9-7	A Clark ★	82
502 (3)	0-0063	Guesstimation (4) (CD) (BF) J Pearce 8-9-7	L Dettori	●90
503 (6)	0-5000	Precedency (6) K McAuliffe 5-9-7	J F Egan	82
504 (8)	05-500	Runic Symbol (18) M Blanshard 6-9-7	J Quinn	78
505 (5)	006/06	Naburn Loch (10) D Hyde 7-9-2	R Havlin (3)	78
506 (1)	/00-00	Prove The Point (14) Mrs P Dutfield 4-9-2	R Price ★	71
507 (2)	030-42	Risky Rose (25) R Hollinshead 5-9-2	D Griffiths (3)	84
508 (10)	56	Rosalee Royale (99) John Berry 5-9-2	M Fenton	—
509 (11)	0/000-	Woodlands Energy (J6) P Pritchard 6-9-2	M Adams	—
510 (12)	0-0000	Irish Fiction (6) D Cosgrove 3-8-8	M Henry ★	70
511 (13)	00000-	Real Fire (211) M Meagher 3-8-8	Dane O'Neill	73
512 (9)	66-060	Victory At Hart (15) D Morris 3-8-8	P Bloomfield	66
513 (4)	000-03	Bluebell Miss (6) M Ryan 3-8-3	G Bardwell	87

Betting: 9-4 Guesstimation, 4-1 Risky Rose, 5-1 Bluebell Miss, 6-1 Irish Fiction, 13-2 Real Fire, 8-1 Runic Symbol, 14-1 Naburn Loch.

FORM GUIDE - **Bernard Seven:** Raced wide, chased leaders until lost place 3f out, behind Castel Rosselo at Thirsk 7f hcap, Gd. **Guesstimation:** Headway over 2f out, soon ridden and hung left, kept on, never near leaders, 3rd of 8, 11l behind Zorba at Redcar 1m 2f claim, Gd. **Precedency:** Headway 3f out, switched right and ran on well final furlong, 8th of 17, 5l behind Diamond Crown at Nottingham 1m 2f sell hcap, Gd. **Runic Symbol:** Soon rear division, some headway under pressure 3f out, soon weakened, behind Mr Teigh at Beverley 1m 2f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Naburn Loch:** Prominent until weakened 2f out, 6th of 12, 14l behind Brigstone at Bath 1m 2f claim, Gd-Fm. **Prove The Point:** Always in the rear, 19th of 20, 26l behind Nossong at Salisbury 1m 4f claim hcap, Fm. **Irish Fiction:** Headway and hard ridden over 2f out, soon weakened, 9th of 11, 25l behind Contentment at Windsor 1m 2f 3-y-o fil hcap, Gd-Fm. **Real Fire:** Never troubled the leaders, last of 9, 24l behind Hello Dolly at W'hampton (a-w) 1m hcap. **Bluebell Miss:** Chased leaders, effort 4f out, stayed on well final furlong, 3rd of 5, 1l behind Nebeshe at Hamilton 1m Stakes, Gd-Sft.

4.45 UGLY BRIDGE HANDICAP
1m £3,741 (14 declared)

601 (2)	321-03	Sharp Rebuff (27) (CD) P Makin 6-10-0	S Sanders	●90
602 (4)	100-05	Admirals Flame (17) (D) C Wall 6-9-11	G Duffield	84
603 (13)	0-0000	Q Factor (17) (D) D Haydn Jones 5-9-8	J Carroll	82
604 (8)	00-400	Snaltach (20) R Hollinshead 4-9-5	L Dettori	86
605 (10)	340413	Sooty Tern (16) (D) J Bradley 10-9-3	R Ffrench (5)	89
606 (11)	03300-	Desert Lynx (242) T Watson 4-9-3	T Quinn	85
607 (3)	200-06	Wild Palm (24) (D) W O'Gorman 5-9-3	D Holland ★	88
608 (14)	-60000	Royal Sceath (8) P Felgate 4-9-0	G Bind	82
609 (9)	2201-0	Maraud (5) J Spearing 3-9-0	F Lynch	78
610 (5)	1100-0	Vani Vidi Vici (12) (CD) M Heaton-Ellis 4-8-13	S Drowne	87
611 (1)	13604-	Helios (265) (D) D Murray Smith 9-8-11	C Lowther (7)	84
612 (6)	000041	Contrader (18) (D) S Dow 8-8-7	M Roberts	86
613 (12)	5-0465	Charolaise Flight (10) S Mellor 3-8-3	J F Egan	84
614 (7)	50323-	Colins Choice (211) J Spearing 3-8-1	Iona Wands (5)	76

Betting: 7-2 Sharp Rebuff, 9-2 Admirals Flame, 5-1 Snaltach, 7-1 Contrader, 8-1 Q Factor, Sooty Tern, 10-1 Helios.

FORM GUIDE - **Sharp Rebuff:** Not clear run 3f out, headway over 1f out, ran on well inside final, 3rd of 15, 2l behind Welcome Wooster at Newbury 7f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Admirals Flame:** Headway final furlong, ran on one pace, 5th of 12, 5l behind King Of Tunes at Newmarket 1m hcap, Gd. **Snaltach:** Never going pace of leaders, 8th of 13, 9l behind Albert The Bear at Chester 7f hcap, Gd-Fm. **Wild Palm:** Held up, effort over 3f out, no impression, 6th of 11, 11l behind Family Man at Newmarket 1m hcap, Gd-Fm.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
J Reid	17	85	20	+3.15
T Quinn	16	93	17.2	+40.02
G Carter	14	90	15.6	-14.47
T Sprake	14	110	12.7	+15.03
Paul Eddery	12	76	15.8	-16.19
Pat Eddery	11	37	29.7	+7.92
M Hills	11	58	19	-6.72

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
R Hannon	10	87	11.5	-24.23
B J Meehan	9	69	13.5	+0.92
Miss Gay Kelleway	7	19	36.8	+22.75
M Bell	7	53	13.2	-21.97
P G Murphy	7	58	12.1	-5.92
M J S Heaton-Ellis	6	31	19.4	+33.50
B W Hills	6	47	12.8	-11.50

Lingfield runners and riders

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
2.30	Shahboor	Imperial Scholar
3.00	Harmage	Up The Wall
3.30	Bayford Thrust	Bayford Thrust
4.00	Bentico	Bentico
4.30	Arriving	Arriving
5.00	Kirov Protege	Absolute Liberty

Turf: Straight 7f140yds course with left-hand loop of about 1¼m attached, providing 4f run-in. Sharp track with downhill run into straight.

All-weather: Equitrack, left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¼m round. No straight sprint track.

Going: Turf: Good to Soft, Back straight Good; All-weather: Standard ★ Denotes blinkers

Draw: Low numbers an advantage in sprints on turf.

Long distance travellers: Bally Souza (4.30), M Johnston, N Yorks, 270 miles, Bayford Thrust (3.30), J Berry, Lancs, 268 miles; Zahran (5.00), J M Bradley, Gwent, 141 miles; The Wyandotte Inn (3.30) & Bentico (4.00), Mrs N Macauley, Leics, 139 miles; Parijazz (3.30), Martyn Meade, Wiltshire, 117 miles; All Newmarket runners for C Dwyer, C Allen, D Morley, D Loder, I Campbell, J Eustace, M Jarvis, M Stoute, P Mitchell & S Woods, 91 miles.

Seven day winners: None.

Blinkered first time: None. **Visored:** None.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

2.30 LONDON COLLEGE OF BEAUTY THERAPY MAIDEN STAKES 3YO
1m 2f (Turf) £3,646 (8 declared)

1 (5)	04	Action Stations (18) C Cyzer 9-0	J Weaver	—
2 (8)	5-0322	Dawam Allail (23) M Jarvis 9-0	Pat Eddery	82
3 (3)	00-	Lancashire Knight (374) S Dow 9-0	W Ryan	—
4 (6)	0-0	Shahboor (61) M Stoute 9-0	J Reid	—
5 (4)	56	Across The Water (18) C Cyzer 8-9	A Whelan (3)	78
6 (1)	0-23	Hachiyah (28) D Morley 8-9	R Hills	86
7 (7)	2-550	Imperial Scholar (18) J Eustace 8-9	R Cochrane	●90
8 (2)	0-0	Interregnum (88) A Foster 8-9	R Perham	—

Betting: 11-10 Imperial Scholar, 9-4 Hachiyah, 5-1 Dawam Allail, 12-1 Action Stations, Shahboor, 16-1 Across The Water.

3.00 CROWHURST SELLING STAKES 2YO
6f (Turf) £1,985 (8 declared)

1 (6)	65	Chilli Shan (18) B Smart 8-11	P McCabe (3)	75
2 (2)	00	Harmage (17) M Channon 8-11	P P Murphy (3)	80
3 (3)	050	Heavenly Falls (17) C Dwyer 8-11	D O'Donohoe (3)	82
4 (4)		Inner Key A P Jones 8-11	J Smith (3)	—
5 (7)	00	Silks Prior (44) K Burke 8-11	R Perham	—
6 (8)	3	Up The Wall (13) I Campbell 8-11	Pat Eddery	●90
7 (1)	403G	Callirum (13) M Blanshard 8-6	R Cochrane	88
8 (5)	204	Rosewood Lady (8) K Burke 8-6	B Doyle	86

Betting: 9-4 Up The Wall, 5-2 Callirum, 4-1 Heavenly Falls, 11-2 Rosewood Lady, 8-1 Harmage, 10-1 Chilli Shan, 16-1 Silks Prior, 33-1 Inner Key

3.30 MARIE POWER 40TH BIRTHDAY HANDICAP 3YO
6f (Turf) £3,837 (9 declared)

1 (6)	5152-6	Silca Key Silca (10) (D) M Channon 9-7	P P Murphy (3)	82
2 (1)	0-0032	Bayford Thrust (6) J Berry 9-5	P Fessey (3)	●90
3 (9)	6-23	Icy Guest (17) P Makin 9-2	Pat Eddery	88
4 (5)	50-054	Noble Investment (41) J Eustace 8-13	R Cochrane ★	83
5 (3)	124314	Shalstayholy (10) (D) G L Moore 8-10	S Whitworth ★	88
6 (7)	252000	The Wyandotte Inn (15) (D) Mrs N Macauley 8-8	Amanda Sanders (5)	88
7 (4)	0-0036	Gunners Glory (66) B Meehan 8-6	B Doyle ★	87
8 (2)	0-000	Chalcra (38) S Dow 8-3	R Perham	77
9 (8)	21-000	Parijazz (40) (D) M Meade 8-3	R Brisland (7)	80

Betting: 3-1 Bayford Thrust, Shalstayholy, 11-2 Icy Guest, Noble Investment, 13-2 Silca Key Silca, 8-1 Gunners Glory, 10-1 Parijazz

4.00 HENRY STREETER LIMITED STAKES
1m (All-weather) £2,784 (4 declared)

1 (4)	033122	Bentico (3) (D) Mrs N Macauley 8-9-7	B Doyle ★	●90
2 (2)	500250	Law Dancer (3) T Mills 4-9-5	Pat Eddery	88
3 (1)	540000	Magazine Gap (10) Pat Mitchell 4-9-5	Amanda Sanders (5)	78
4 (3)	200230	Enchanting Eve (8) (CD) C Allen 3-8-10	Martin Dwyer (3)	87

Betting: 8-11 Bentico, 5-2 Enchanting Eve, 7-2 Law Dancer, 25-1 Magazine Gap.

4.30 KNIGHT FRANK FILLIES' HANDICAP 3YO
1m 3f 106yds (Turf) £3,423 (5 declared)

1 (3)	5-62	Graceful Lass (17) D Loder 9-7	Pat Eddery	88
2 (2)	035-62	Bally Souza (8) M Johnston 9-2	J Weaver	87
3 (1)	024	Georgia Venture (38) S Woods 9-1	W Ryan	85
4 (4)	4-661	Arriving (11) (D) J Hills 8-8	R Hills	●90
5 (5)	0-002	Cheek To Cheek (13) C Cyzer 7-13	A Whelan (3)	88

Betting: 5-4 Arriving, 4-1 Graceful Lass, 5-1 Bally Souza, Cheek To Cheek, 11-2 Georgia Venture

5.00 SCHATUNOWSKI BROOKS APPRENTICES' HANDICAP
1m 2f (Turf) £2,411 (8 declared)

1 (5)	6-3246	Peppers (15) K Burke 4-10-0	Emily Joyce (5)	87
2 (4)	330-5	Rash Gift (122) Lord Huntingdon 4-9-4	Aimee Cook	78
3 (8)	400-15	Absolute Liberty (22) S Woods 3-9-2	G Milligan	●90
4 (6)	363010	Roman Reel (3) (D) G L Moore 6-9-1	Cheryl Nosworthy (7)	85
5 (7)	/40-00	Another Fiddle (46) J Long 7-9-3	R Brisland (5)	—
6 (2)	240555	Flagstaff (6) K Burke 4-8-1	R Winston (3)	85
7 (3)	056015	Kirov Protege (4) Mrs L Jewell 5-7-13	D Williams (5)	88
8 (1)	054342	Zahran (19) J Bradley 6-7-11	J Fowle (5)	80

Betting: 9-4 Kirov Protege, 3-1 Roman Reel, 5-1 Zahran, 11-2 Peppers, 7-1 Absolute Liberty, 10-1 Rash Gift, Flagstaff, 16-1 Another Fiddle.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
L Dettori	89	358	24.9	+12.15
J Weaver	85	397	21.4	+16.13
R Cochrane	66	378	17.5	+20.60
A Clark	55	463	11.9	-23.87
S Sanders	53	494	10.7	-142.51
T Quinn	49	318	15.4	-52.76
D Holland	46	194	23.7	+62.69

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
G L Moore	68	492	13.8	-57.20
M Johnston	54	293	18.4	-35.59
Lord Huntingdon	48	233	20.6	-17.91
J Berry	31	151	20.5	+14.38
S Dow	30	369	8.19	-62.17
C A Cyzer	24	208	11.5	-54.63
B J Meehan	23	185	12.4	-31.15

Trainer watch

Horses having their first run for a new trainer today — **Warwick:** 4.15 Rosalee Royale, J E Long to John Berry, 4.45 Helios, N J H Walker to D J G Murray-Smith

Lingfield: 3.30 The Wyandotte Inn, R Hollinshead to Mrs N Macauley.

Results

NOTTINGHAM

2.15 (1m 54yds): 1, FLASHTALKIN' FLOOD, W Ryan (2-1 Fav); **2, Chamberlan** (14-1); **3, Feel A Line** (10-1); **4, Prince of Fortune** (12-1). 17 ran. 4, 3, 2. (C Dwyer) Tote: £3.00; £1.10, £6.60, £2.40, £2.80. Dual F: £98.00. Trio: £41.00. CSF: £33.56. Tricast: £252.32. Non Runner: Fan of Vent-Axia.

2.45 (1m 54yds): 1, MITHALI, R Hills (8-1); **2, Yabint El Sultan** (11-2); **3, Jerreeka** (4-7 Fav). 10 ran. 3½, 2½. (B Hills) Tote: £8.60; £1.60, £1.50, £1.10. Dual F: £19.00. Trio: £4.50. CSF: £49.54.

3.15 (1m 54yds): 1, LIQUID GOLD, R Ffrench (7-2); **2, Keraka** (3-1); **3, Windy Treat** (9-4 Fav). 9 ran. 1½, 3. (W O'Gorman) Tote: £8.30; £1.80, £1.40, £1.20. Dual F: £5.90. Trio: £3.40. CSF: £13.37.

3.45 (1m 1f 213yds): 1, TONNERRE, L Newton (16-1); **2, Hill Farm Blues** (9-1); **3, Kristal Breeze** (7-1). **4, Brookhollow** (50-1). 100-30 Fav Tonka. 16 ran. 1½, 1½, 3. (B McMahon) Tote: £21.00; £4.20, £3.30, £2.00, £17.40. DF: £136.20. Trio: £971.80. CSF: £150.78. Tricast: £1,040.57. NR: Supreme Malmoon.

4.15 (2m 9yds): 1, BRODESSA, A McGlone (3-1); **2, Swan Hunter** (5-2); **3, Rose of Glenn** (14-1). 2-1 Fav Sedbergh. 10 ran. 4, 4. (Mrs M Reveley) Tote: £4.70; £1.60, £1.40, £3.00. Dual F: £7.10. Trio: £29.00. CSF: £10.70. Non Runner: Club Elite.

4.45 (6f 15yds): 1, ANITA AT DAWN, T Sprake (20-1); **2, Sandy Shore** (12-1). **3, The Rich Man** (9-2). 7-4 Fav Moothyeb. 10 ran. ¾, hd. (B Palling) Tote: £18.60; £3.30, £2.30, £1.60. DF: £66.30. Trio: £37.70. CSF £238.13.

5.15 (6f 15yds): 1, SUPERBIT, L Newton (12-1); **2, Aquatic Queen** (8-1); **3, Shashi** (25-1). **4, Semperfidelis** (16-1). 3-1 Fav Nellie North. 20 ran. 2, 1, nk. (B McMahon) Tote: £13.50; £2.70, £2.00, £10.80, £3.00. DF: £74.10. CSF: £107.99. Trio: £580.70. Tricast: £2,285.82

JACKPOT: £35,751. – part won. Pool of £453,193.30 carried forward to Warwick.

QUADPOT: £37.10. **PLACEPOT:** £44.90.

MUSSELBURGH

2.30 (5f): 1, ELLENBROOK, P Fessey (4-9 Fav); **2, Malzabu Don** (5-1); **3, Oriel Girl** (4-1). 4 ran. 1¾, 3. (J Berry) Tote: £1.30. Dual F: £1.80. CSF: £2.77.

3.00 (2m): 1, TRILBY, T E Durcan (3-1); **2, Hasta La Vista** (3-1); **3, Zamhareer** (8-1). 11-4 Fav Sarasota Storm. 7 ran. 7, 9. (G Richards) Tote: £4.00; £1.80, £1.70. Dual F: £3.70. CSF: £10.06.

3.30 (5f): 1, BLAZING IMP, M Fenton (33-1); **2, Prince of Parkes** (7-2); **3, Good To Talk** (5-1). 9-4 Fav Gold Edge. 10 ran. Hd, 2. (Mrs J Jordan) Tote: £89.00; £8.80, £1.80, £1.70. Dual F: £363.40. Trio: £187.50. CSF: £136.72.

4.00 (7f): 1, BUZZ, Dean McKeown (15-8); **2, Jacmar** (6-4 Fav); **3, Densecbee** (20-1). 8 ran. 1, 1¾. (C Thornton) Tote: £3.20; £1.40, £1.10. DF: £1.30. CSF: £4.67

4.30 (7f): 1, HIGH SPIRITS, L Charnock (7-2 Jt Fav); **2, Barraaba** (11-2); **3, Anetta** (6-1). 7-2 Jt Fav Eager To Please. 9 ran. 3, 2½. (T Easterby) Tote: £3.80; £1.80, £1.50, £3.00. Dual F: £7.70. Trio: £60.40. CSF: £21.71. Tricast: £104.10.

5.00 (1m 4f): 1, KERNOF, J Carroll (11-2); **2, Yet Again** (8-11 Fav); **3, Latvian** (10-1). 9 ran. Hd, 2. (M Hammond) Tote: £7.60; £2.00, £1.30, £1.90. Dual F: £5.80. Trio: £24.80. CSF: £8.81. Tricast: £35.34.

QUADPOT: £12.40. **PLACEPOT:** £41.50

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Cricket

England v Australia: second Test, final day

The new firm steer England to safety

Mike Selvey sees Hobbs and Sutcliffe all but matched by the openers at Lord's

A MATCH which had spent much of its time under cloud ended in bright sunshine yesterday evening as a draw, the first time the Australians had not had a result one way or the other in 19 Tests.

From the first ball it looked like being a day to test England's resolve to the limit as, with an overnight lead of 136 and the prospect of a damp morning for his bowlers to exploit, Mark Taylor had declared his first innings closed and let slip his dogs of war. Without question he and his men expected to win; equally, had he been up against the England side of a few years ago, he might have found them expecting to lose.

This England is made of sterner stuff, however. With the pitch, if not perfect, then certainly kinder than at any other stage in the match, Mike Atherton and Mark Butcher went to work. Tentatively at first and then gloriously later, they compiled an opening partnership that had wiped off the deficit by mid-afternoon and ended when they were within 20 of the England ground record against Australia, the 182 put on in 1926 by Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe.

It was England's first century opening since that between Atherton and Alec Stewart against India at Trent Bridge 10 Test matches ago.

Atherton, that most bloody-minded of batsmen, was virtually guaranteed to make runs in such testing circumstances as these, and he did so almost without fault for more than 3½ hours. Then, with a century looking his for the taking just as it did here four years ago, the Fates conspired to rob him of it.

In the previous Ashes Test at Lord's Atherton slipped and was run out for 99. Yesterday he had reached 77 when he trod on his stumps as he worked Michael Kasprowicz for legside runs.

Atherton, however, has now passed 50 on 44 occasions in Tests and will surely do so again many times. Butcher, on the other hand, was a young man under intense scrutiny yesterday.

At Edgbaston the Surrey opener had found the jagging new ball hard to handle and in the first innings here Glenn McGrath and Paul Reiffel had turned him inside out before he became one of McGrath's eight victims. Butcher's gloom was compounded when his usually safe hands let him down in the field.

The assessment of an international player, though, is not just about how many runs he scores but whether he is made of the right stuff. With England going for continuity now, Butcher may well have been given another chance at Old Trafford. But, if ever a man was playing for the right to go there with his head held high, then this was it.

He can certainly do that now. Butcher was tested to the full early on and Taylor missed him at slip off Reiffel when he had made only two. It looked a simple low chance that the fielder, a quality catcher, would expect to take, although the ball did seem to swerve late and dip.

With that behind him, Butcher's confidence visibly improved and, with it, his footwork and shot-selection. By the time Shane Warne found the perfect spot in the rough created by McGrath from which to rip a leg-break through his drive he had hit 14 boundaries in making 87 and was approaching his century with panache. It was not only the ground from which the clouds lifted yesterday.

A mini-collapse that saw the back of Stewart and Nasser Hussain, whose downfalls owed something to confidence and the knowledge that the game was safe, was ended by an unbroken fifth-wicket stand of 64 between Graham Thorpe (30 not out) and John Crawley (29 not out).

A declaration, which finished the game, came at 5.20 with England 266 for four, 130 on. The odds at start of play on that particular scenario would have been long indeed.

There were no dream figures second time around for McGrath, who must have looked out of his hotel window first thing, seen the cloud base and fleetingly nurtured hopes of emulating Bob Massie by following up his stupendous bowling of the first innings with a repeat.

McGrath made the new ball bite and bounce and had Butcher missing, the opener being so desperate to put bat to ball that time and again he was pushing ahead of his feet and body. But the edge had gone from the pace of the pitch and McGrath's 20 overs brought him the single wicket of Stewart, caught at long leg hooking. Consolation for McGrath came when he was named Man of the Match by Ian Chappell, an award no one could dispute.

The most dangerous bowler was Shane Warne, as he should be on the fifth day of a Test. Conditions, lack of rhythm and, one suspects, injury have given him a lean few months and until Butcher's dismissal his previous 121 overs had brought him only the wicket of Hussain in Birmingham, and even then not until he had been batted off the park.

Warne got Hussain again yesterday, snaffling a caught-and-bowled and finishing with two for 47 from 19 overs. It was not much by his standards but it may be the beginning of a return for the leg-spinner.

Afterwards Australia's captain Taylor warned: "There are still four Tests to go and I think we can win three of them. We're not at full throttle yet: there are areas we can improve in.

"Shane Warne is not at his full potential yet.

"I was delighted with the way we came back after Edgbaston although I didn't expect England to lie down today." He held up his hand to putting Butcher down, saying: "It was a nasty one to drop and it might have made the difference."

England were glad of that difference yesterday.

Hard and fast . . . Mark Butcher pulls strongly to leg past Greg Blewett as England force a draw with a battling rearguard action PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIAN MURRELL

Scoreboard

ENGLAND
First innings

M A Butcher c Blewett b McGrath	5
*M A Atherton c Taylor b McGrath	1
†A J Stewart b McGrath	1
N Hussain lbw b McGrath	19
G P Thorpe c Blewett b Reiffel	21
J P Crawley c Healy b McGrath	1
M A Ealham c Elliott b Reiffel	7
R D B Croft c Healy b McGrath	2
D Gough c Healy b McGrath	10
A R Caddick lbw b McGrath	1
D E Malcolm not out	0
Extras (b4, nb5)	9
Total (42.3 overs)	77

Fall of wickets: 11, 12, 13, 47, 56, 62, 66, 76, 77.
Bowling: McGrath 20.3–8–38–8; Reiffel 15–9–17–2; Kasprowicz 5–1–9–0; Warne 2–0–9–0.

AUSTRALIA
First innings

*M A Taylor b Gough	1
G S Blewett c Hussain b Croft	45
M T G Elliott c Crawley b Caddick	112
M E Waugh c Malcolm b Caddick	33
S K Warne c Hussain b Gough	0
S R Waugh lbw b Caddick	0
M G Bevan c Stewart b Caddick	4
†I A Healy not out	13
P R Reiffel not out	1
Extras (b1, lb3)	4
Total (for 7 dec, 61 overs)	213

Fall of wickets: 4, 73, 147, 147, 147, 159, 212.
Did not bat: M S Kasprowicz, G D McGrath.
Bowling: Gough 20–4–82–2; Caddick 22–6–71–4; Malcolm 7–1–26–0; Croft 12–5–30–1.

ENGLAND
Second innings

M A Butcher b Warne	87
*M A Atherton hit wicket b Kasprowicz	77
†A J Stewart c Kasprowicz b McGrath	13
N Hussain c & b Warne	0
G P Thorpe not out	30
J P Crawley not out	29
Extras (b8, lb14, w1, nb7)	30
Total (for 4 dec, 79 overs)	266

Fall of wickets: 162, 189, 197, 202.
Bowling: McGrath 20–5–65–1; Reiffel 13–5–29–0; Kasprowicz 15–3–54–1; Warne 19–4–47–2; Bevan 8–1–29–0; S R Waugh 4–0–20–0.
Umpires: D R Shepherd and S Venkataraghavan.
Match drawn.

Slogger's side-on glance

Repressed Englishman award: Lord's streaker in underpants.
Slogger's streaking rules:
1. Don't do it.
2. If you have to do it, at least have the decency to do it properly.

Most impressive fully-clothed Englishman:
1. Michael Atherton.
2. Mark Butcher.

Emperor without any clothes award: Shane Warne.
Bare-faced cheek award: Glenn McGrath's appeal for a catch after the ball had brushed Atherton's arm.
Undefeated streak: England: seven Tests, and rising.

Laid-back Atherton stumps his Australian interrogator

David Hopps sees England's leader and a troubled batsman in good heart

IT MIGHT be reasonably presumed that yesterday's most moving moment was the unfortunate dismissal of Michael Atherton.

Here was a batsman in his record-breaking 42nd Test as captain of England denied a first Test hundred at Lord's when he inadvertently stood back on his stumps. He did not even slip, merely misjudged a simple procedure he had carried out since childhood.

But why be carried away? Atherton was not, as he packed away his medals, his commemorative photos and his silver salvers. "Just another Test," he muttered, leading one Australian interrogator to exclaim incredulously: "Don't you get emotional about anything? You don't have to be specific." Atherton grinned hugely. An Australian taken aback by his stoicism, and what's more an Australian who had depicted this Ashes series as an extended summer holiday.

Now, that was something to get emotional about. But only in private, only if the Ashes were eventually won, and only long after his retirement.

For the moment, he drew heart from the way that England "comfortably got out of a dodgy situation", although to find himself batting to save the game after the elation of Edgbaston must have felt a little too much like old times.

There was measured satisfaction to be gleaned, though, from Mark Butcher's contribution. Three Test failures had left both his place and his technique under question, but a first-wicket stand of 162 was an unyielding response.

Butcher was remarkably nonchalant about it. "Cricket's like any profession," he said. "If you screw up enough times, you've had it."

Both Atherton and his Australian counterpart, Mark Taylor, dutifully insisted that they are not about to, that they had emerged from the Lord's Test psychologically much the stronger for the experience.

These are unusual times for Australia. They are 1-0 down in the series and they have drawn for the first time in 19 Tests. But Taylor trusts that the old ways are returning. "We played much more like the Australians I have known for the last eight years," he said.

Lara ton puts West Indies in control

BRIAN LARA scored a century to help West Indies gain an upper hand in the finely-balanced second Test against Sri Lanka in St Vincent. Lara scored 115 on the fourth day as West Indies reached 308 for seven at tea in their second innings, a lead of 233.

He and Carl Hooper added 83 for the fourth wicket after Floyd Reifer had been dismissed in the opening half-hour for 18. Lara, 30 overnight, emerged from an unsteady start to the day to bring up his half-century by lifting the off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan over mid-on. Muralitharan came in for further heavy punishment from Lara, who hit his only six over mid-on, before striking three boundaries in the last over before lunch.

Earlier, Lara and Reifer had stretched their third-wicket stand to 51 before the Barbadian slashed at a wide ball outside off stump from Ravindra Pushpakumara to give the wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwitharana an easy catch.

NatWest Trophy first round

Depleted Lancashire look to lift the clouds

MIKE ATHERTON, having helped England out of the mire yesterday, returns to Old Trafford today where he will hope to end Lancashire's sticky start to the season as the NatWest Trophy holders meet Berkshire in the competition's first round, *writes Ian Malin.*

Lancashire have never lost to minor county opposition but Berkshire might feel their chances of causing an upset are as good as they will ever be.

Lancashire's defence of the Benson and Hedges Cup, which they also won last season, ended at the zonal stage this summer. They are hampered by injuries and the side that are a place off the bottom of the County Championship were bowled out for 51 in losing to Glamorgan at Liverpool last weekend.

Atherton will captain the side today in the absence of Mike Watkinson, out injured along with two other leading players Wasim Akram and Jason Gallian. Neil Fairbrother is also doubtful.

Lancashire's pace bowler Glen Chapple, whose six for 18 in last year's final enabled Lancashire to dismiss Essex for a record-low 57, is only too aware of the potential for an upset.

"You run a real risk if you take a side like Berkshire lightly," stressed Chapple. "You have to treat them just the same as any other side. But we have been in good form on Sundays so there is no reason why we can't translate that to the NatWest."

Derbyshire, another county in some disarray following the departure of their captain Dean Jones and the demotion of the coach Les Stillman, face a potentially hazardous tie, a trip to Lincoln.

The all-rounder Matthew Vandrau is included in Derbyshire's squad for the first time since breaking his hand in the opening 2nd XI match of the season, along with the 21-year-old off-spinner Simon Lacey.

The only two all first-class ties take place at Lord's, where Kent face Middlesex, and The Oval, where Surrey's Test trio Mark Butcher, Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe meet an improving Durham.

Cricket
Nat West Trophy
News and Scores
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Derbyshire	31	Middlesex	40
Durham	32	Northants	41
Essex	33	Nottingham	42
Glamorgan	34	Somerset	43
Gloucs.	35	Surrey	44
Hampshire	36	Sussex	45
Kent	37	Warwicks.	46
Lancs	38	Worcester	47
Leics.	39	Yorkshire	48

Complete county scores
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Wimbledon: Day One

Open cast . . . Tim Henman, right, puts Daniel Nestor of Canada to the sword 7–6, 6–1, 6–4 during the inaugural game in the new No. 1 Court

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Henman lauds green grass of home

Richard Williams hears Britain's No. 1 make all the right noises after his opening victory on the All England Club's lush new court

IT MAY have been the first recorded instance of a round of applause for a patch of lawn. When the court attendants unpeeled the covers to reveal the emerald green rectangle in the middle of Wimbledon's new No. 1 Court yesterday, a wave of clapping broke across the open terraces surrounding the shiny dish. An hour or so later, struggling to put his game together against an obscure Canadian world-ranked 85 places beneath him, Tim Henman might have been forgiven for harbouring rather different thoughts.

Unsurprisingly, the turf on court one appeared lush and untrodden. But although it looked as though it might be about to exhibit characteristics seldom seen from grass in SW19, Henman later paid tribute to both the surface and the spectacular surroundings in terms that would have been music to the ears of the All England Club.

"It was a great honour to be asked to play the first match," he said after winning his opening match, eliminating Daniel Nestor 7–6 (13–11), 6–1, 6–4 in just over an hour and 40 minutes. "The place felt a lot like the Centre Court, and the surface was harder than I expected. There were no bad bounces, and it played just like every other court."

Yet the local boy had started out looking rather less at home in the new environment than his opponent. The 24-year-old Nestor was making his third visit to Wimbledon, having been knocked out in the second round in 1995 and eliminated by Greg Rusedski in the first round last year, but although the 6ft 2in left-hander surrendered his service in the third game of the first set, he broke back immediately and then, serving a couple of aces per game, hustled his opponent towards the tie-break.

Henman's serve, by contrast, had begun by looking quite out of kilter. Neither power nor direction were in evidence until the tie-break, when he fought off three set-points before taking his own fourth to win it. "At that point," he said, "I thought 'Let's make life a bit easier. Let's go up a few gears.' " His return of serve gathered potency, winning breaks in the second and sixth games. His serve also began to hum, two clean aces in the fifth game and three in the seventh blowing Nestor clean out of the set.

> 'It was a great honour to be asked to play the first match'

The Canadian was one game up in the third when rain arrived, forcing a suspension of almost an hour and a half. At this point the fear was aroused that we might be in danger of a return recital by Sir Cliff Richard, who had been present at the official opening of the court and had stayed on to watch the match.

Accompanied by Miss Annabel Croft, Sir Cliff's presence alone virtually guaranteed the arrival of rain. He looked prepared for all eventualities. The Heathcliff beard had disappeared, but the bright mauve blazer, carefully selected to clash with the purple stripes of his All England Club tie, did nothing to disguise his presence in the members' seats. So he may have been disappointed when the interruption failed to prompt a popular demand for a reprise of last year's impromptu performance.

When Henman and Nestor returned, the English No. 1 levelled the third set at one-all with a magnificent half-volleyed passing shot played from the baseline on the back foot, improvised in response to a fine drive from his opponent. Allowing Nestor no chance to settle, he broke the Canadian's serve to love in the third game, polishing it off with a rattle of volleys and thereafter giving his opponent not a hint of an opportunity to strike back. Another admirably original piece of shot-making saw him run around his opponent's serve during the ninth game to wipe a dipping forehand across the incoming volleyer.

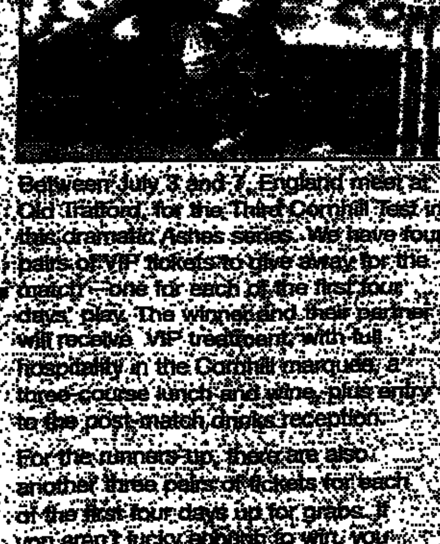
In the second round he meets the winner of the suspended match between Jamie Delgado, the British No. 9, and Jerome Golmard of France, another 6ft 2in left-hander. Ranked 94 in the world, Golmard comes from Dijon and reached the quarter-final at Queen's a fortnight ago before losing in straight sets to Goran Ivanisevic. Aged 23, he lost in the first round of his only previous Wimbledon appearance last year, to Mark Knowles of the Bahamas. He and Henman have never met before. Yesterday he was leading Delgado by 6–4, 6–2, 6–7 (4–7), 5–2 when the rain returned.

The formal opening of court one at lunchtime had featured a parade of most of the surviving winners of more than three singles titles. As if they did not already have enough silverware at home, Louise Brough, Rod Laver, the Rev Margaret Court, Billie Jean King, John Newcombe, Christine Evert, Martina Navratilova, John McEnroe, Boris Becker and Pete Sampras each received a commemorative salver from the Duke of Kent.

Hard, and perhaps invidious, though it might be to suggest which of the immortals was granted the warmest welcome, it could be said that Laver and Navratilova were accorded the respect due to the very greatest, while the greeting for Evert — looking all of five minutes older than on her Wimbledon debut as a 17-year-old in 1972 — contained a special affection. McEnroe, enthusiastically received, looked down at the fresh turf as though he wished he had a racket in his hand to swish at it.

The Guardian Sports Offer

WIN VIP TICKETS TO THE THIRD CORNHILL TEST MATCH



Between July 3 and 7, England meet at Old Trafford, for the Third Cornhill Test in this dramatic Ashes series. We have four pairs of VIP tickets to give away for the match — one for each of the first four days' play. The winner and their partner will receive VIP treatment, with full hospitality in the Cornhill marquee, a three-course lunch and wine, plus entry to the post-match drinks reception.

For the runners-up, there are also another three pairs of tickets for each of the first four days up for grabs. If you aren't lucky enough to win, you can catch all the action on the Guardian and Wisden's website, Ashes 97. The site offers the most comprehensive coverage of the Ashes online at: http://www.ashes.co.uk

To enter the draw, simply call the hotline number below. (SP01)

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Athletics

Christie given Black backing

Duncan Mackay

ROGER BLACK has promised to stand aside as captain if Linford Christie decides he wants to compete in the World Championships. It follows Christie's inspirational performances in Munich that helped Britain lift the European Cup for the first time since 1989.

"If he changes his mind I will happily stand down," said Black, who had been chosen to succeed Christie after the former world and Olympic 100 metres champion announced that this meeting would be his last appearance for Britain. "It's up to him whether he goes to Athens, but physically he is still capable."

But Christie, whose sprint double ensured he successfully defended his record of never having been beaten in the European Cup and took his number of victories to 17, insisted that he will not do a U-turn this time. "This is the last time I'm going to be here in a British vest," he said. "I know people don't believe me, but really it is."

Christie equalled his European Cup record of 10.04 seconds in the 100m and is running better than ever for the time of year.

"You can't fault his athletic prowess or his commitment to the British team," said Black, who won the 400m. "He has performed for his country — usually from the front."

Just as important as Christie's contribution was the performances of the unheralded members of the team. The biggest surprise was Robert Hough, whose victory in the 3,000m steeplechase earned Britain five more points than they expected in the competition. The 25-year-old Sheffield University German graduate was as shocked as everyone else. "When you go out to race you try to be as positive as possible," he said. "But in reality, I never expected to win."

In the meantime, British athletics was given a boost after failing to win a gold medal at last year's Atlanta Olympics. The performance of the women's team in finishing third, when many had feared relegation, encouraged both athletes and administrators to expect even better times ahead.

"A lot of people had a lot of bad luck in Atlanta," said Black. "But here no one had bad luck. People exceeded their expectations. We've got athletes who have proved they can compete with the best in Europe. Hopefully, now they can do it on the world stage."

Impoverished British athletics should start reaping the financial benefits immediately when Sheffield stages the country's flagship meeting, the International Amateur Athletics Federation grand prix on Sunday.

The highlight will be Christie's 150m race against Donovan Bailey, and organisers are hoping for a 22,000 sell-out to welcome home Britain's European Cup heroes.

● Paul Edwards, banned for failing a drugs test in 1994, has lost his High Court attempt to have his four-year suspension overturned.

Sport in brief

Cycling

Chris Boardman increased his lead in the Tour of Catalonia with a resounding victory in yesterday's fifth stage, a 22km time-trial in Vic. The British time-trial specialist, who holds the world one-hour record, carved out a 46sec advantage over Spain's Aitor Garmendia to stretch his overall lead 1min 10sec.

Motor Sport

A change from rain tyres to the faster slicks with 10 laps remaining helped Britain's Mark Blundell win his first Indycar race after a close struggle with Gil de Ferran in the Budweiser GI Joe's 200 in Portland, Oregon. Blundell's 18 Motorola PacWest Mercedes-Benz passed the Brazilian's Reynard Honda on the final straight to win by 27-thousandths of a second. It was the closest race in Indycar history.

Golf

Jack Nicklaus has confirmed that he will play at next month's Open in Troon, the course where the 57-year-old first played the event in 1962.

Bowls

The former world champion Margaret Johnston rewrote the record books in Ayr yesterday when she became the first player to win the British women's singles championship for a third time. The defending champion from Ballymoney beat the Welsh title-holder Ann Dainton 25–11. Dainton had lost out by only one shot in Sunday's pairs final.

Hockey

England, playing their first junior international of the year, were beaten 6–0 by Australia at Milton Keynes, the venue for September's Junior World Cup, *writes Pat Rowley*. The countries meet again at the same venue tomorrow.

Results

Soccer

WORLD CUP QUALIFYING: Asian Zone: Group Seven: Kuwait 3, Lebanon 1. **Final standings:** 1, Kuwait (P4, Pts12); 2, Lebanon (4–4); 3, Singapore (4–1). Kuwait qualify for second round.

COPA AMERICA: Quarter-finals: Brazil 2 (Ronaldo 2), Paraguay 0. **Semi-finals: June 25** (La Paz): Bolivia v Mexico. **June 26** (Santa Cruz): Brazil v Peru.

INTERTOTO CUP: Group One: Dinamo-93 Minsk (Bela) 1, Heerenveen (Neth) 0; Aalborg (Den) 2, Polonia Warsaw (Pol) 0. **Group Two:** Hrvatski Dragovoljac (Cro) 0, Bastia (Fr) 1; Graz (Aut) 2, Silkeborg (Den) 0. **Group Three:** Ards (Ire) 0, Royal Antwerp (Bel) 1; Lausanne (Switz) 4, Nea Salamina (Cyp) 1. **Group Four:** Maccabi Petah Tikva (Isr) 1, Cologne (Ger) 3; Standard Liege (Bel) 0, Aarau (Switz) 0. **Group Five:** Bottisalagid (Faroe Is) 0, Genk (Bel) 5, Panachaiki (Gr) 1, Stabaek (Nor) 1. **Group Six:** Ithrottabalagid (Ice) 1, Hamburg (Ger) 2; Samsunspor (Tur) 2, Odense (Den) 0. **Group Seven:** Universitate (Lat) 1, Istanbulspor (Tur) 5; Oster Vaxjo (Swe) 1, Vasas (Hun) 4. **Group Eight:** Kongsvinger (Nor) 1, Lommel (Bel) 1; Hajduk Rodic (Yug) 0, Halmstad (Swe) 1. **Group Nine:** Zilina (Slovak) 3, Austria Vienna (Aut) 1, Odra Wodzislaw (Pol) 2, Rapid Bucharest (Rom) 4. **Group 10:** Floria Bistrita (Rom) 1, Montpellier (Fr) 2; Groningen (Neth) 1, Cukaricki (Yug) 0. **Group 11:** Publikum (Sloven) 1, Antalyaspor (Tur) 1; Proleter (Yug) 4, Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 0. **Group 12:** Merani (Geo) 0, Torpedo Moscow (Rus) 2, Ried (Aut) 3, Heraklis Salonika (Gr) 1.

WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP (Malaysia): **Group D:** Japan 3, Paraguay 3, Spain 4, Costa Rica 0. **Group E:** Australia 4, Argentina 3; Canada 2, Hungary 1. **Group F:** England 1 (Owen), Mexico 0; United Arab Emirates 2, Ivory Coast 0.

Final standings	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Mexico	3	1	1	1	6	2	4
UAE	3	1	0	2	2	10	3
Ivory Coast	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

Top two teams in each group plus the four best third placed sides qualify for the second round.

Rugby League

SUPER LEAGUE
WORLD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
Pool A

Canterbury (20) **34, London** (4) **18. Canterbury: Tries:** Hetherington 2, El Masri, Norton, B Ward. **Goals:** Halligan 7. **London: Tries:** Edwards, Krause, Offiah, Roskell. **Goals:** Matterson.

Golf

BUICK CLASSIC (Harrison, NY). **Final scores** (US unless stated): **268** E Els (SA) 64, 68, 67, 69 **270** J Maggert 67, 68, 66, 69 **274** J Furyk 67, 68, 69, 70; R Damron 71, 66, 68, 69. **275** J Carter 69, 70, 71, 65. **277** B Estes 71, 67, 71, 68; C Rose 69, 69, 70, 69; S Cink 73, 68, 66, 70. **278** B Fabel 68, 67, 74, 68; P Jordan 69, 68, 69, 72. **279** B Faxon 66, 74, 70, 69. **281** F Nobilo (NZ) 70, 69, 77, 65; D Frost (SA) 78, 67, 66, 70; V Singh (Fiji) 67, 73, 69, 72; M Reid 70, 69, 68, 74; B Andrade 73, 71, 64, 73. **282** S Appleby (Aus) 70, 73, 69, 70; L Janzen 70, 72, 71, 69, N Henke 72, 68, 70, 72; C Perry 71, 72, 67, 72. **Also: 283** R Alarcon (Mex) 69, 69, 73, 72. **285** C Parry (Aus) 70, 73, 73, 69. **286** F Allem (SA) 72, 72, 71, 71. **287** B Hughes (Aus) 70, 72, 71, 74; S Elkington (Aus) 74, 70, 70, 73. **289** G Hjertstedt (Swe) 73, 71, 75, 70. **296** P Tataurangi (NZ) 74, 71, 77, 76.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Cleveland 5, NY Yankees 2; Detroit 1, Boston 2; Toronto 2, Baltimore 5; Chicago WS 2, Minnesota 1; Milwaukee 5, Kansas City 6; Anaheim 7, Oakland 6; Texas 4, Seattle 8. **Standings: East Division:** 1, Baltimore (W48, L22, Pct.686, GB0); 2, NY Yankees (40–32–.556–9); 3, Toronto (33–36–.478–14½); 4, Detroit (32–38–.457–16); 5, Boston (32–40–.444–17). **Central Division:** 1, Cleveland (37–32–.536–0); 2, Milwaukee (34–35–.493–3); 3, Kansas City (34–35–.493–3); 4, Chicago WS (34–37–.479–4); 5, Minnesota (33–39–.458–5½). **West Division:** 1, Seattle (42–31–.575–0); 2, Anaheim (38–34–.528–3½); 3, Texas (36–35–.507–5); 4, Oakland (30–45–.400–13).

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Montreal 0, Florida 2; Philadelphia 5, Atlanta 12; NY Mets 12, Pittsburgh 9 (in 10); St Louis 5, Cincinnati 2; Houston 3, Chicago Cubs 1; San Diego 4, Colorado 2; San Francisco 4, Los Angeles 2. **Standings: East Division:** 1, Atlanta (W47, L26, Pct.644, GB0); 2, Florida (43–29–.597–3½); 3, Montreal (41–31–.569–5½); 4, NY Mets (41–32–.562–6); 5, Philadelphia (22–49–.310–24). **Central Division:** 1, Houston (37–37–.500–0); 2, St Louis (33–39–.458–3); 3, Pittsburgh (33–40–.452–3½); 4, Cincinnati (30–42–.417–6); 5, Chicago Cubs (28–45–.384–8½). **West Division:** 1, San Francisco (42–31–.575–0); 2, Colorado (39–35–.527–3½); 3, Los Angeles (35–37–.493–6); 4, San Diego (31–42–.425–11).

Bowls

BRITISH WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (Ayr): **Singles: Final: M Johnston** (Ire, Ballymoney) bt A Dainton (Wales, Barry Plastics) 25–11.

Chess

NOVGOROD TOURNAMENT: 10th round: E Bareev (Rus) v V Topalov (Bul) V Kramnik (Rus) v B Gelfand (Belarus) N Short (Eng) v G Kasparov (Rus) all drawn. **Final scores:** Kasparov 17; Kramnik 15; Short 14; Bareev, Gelfand, Topalov all 10. A win counted 3pts.

Cricket

AON RISK TROPHY: Bishop Auckland: Durham v Derbyshire. Match abandoned. **Chelmsford:** Essex 178 (G R Napier 51; Salisbury 4–25). Surrey 179–8 (D J Bicknell 47). Surry won by four wickets. **Southampton:** Gloucestershire 231–5 (R C J Williams 54no). Hampshire 219–8 (G W White 74, G R Treagus 55). Gloucestershire won by 12 runs. **Southgate:** Middlesex 159–9 (40 overs, Steele 4–22 including hat-trick). Northamptonshire 51–2 (12.1 overs). No result.

Cycling

TOUR OF SWITZERLAND: Seventh stage (Locarno to Zug: 194km): 1, T Steels (Bel) 5hr 25min 13sec; 2, E Zabel (Ger); 3, L Aus (Est); 4, F Baldato (It); 5, F Guidi (It); 6, N Minali (It) all same time. **Leading overall:** 1, C Agnolutto (Fr) 24hr 8min 31sec; 2, O Camenzind (Switz) at 5min 14sec; 3, J Ullrich (Ger) 6.15; 4, D Extebarria (Sp) 6.20; 5, R Meier (Switz) 7.06; 6, F Garcia Gasas (Sp) 8.02.

TOUR OF CATALONIA (Vic): Fifth stage (time-trial, 22km): 1, C Boardman (GB) Gan 25min 17sec; 2, A Garmendia (Sp) ONCE at 46sec; 3, A Lasntzbarrutia (Sp) ONCE 51; 4, A Luis Casero (Sp) Banesto 59; 5, M Zarrabeitia (Sp) ONCE 1.07; 6, B Voskamp (Neth) TVM 1.12. **Leading overall:** 1, Boardman 14hr 58min 43sec; 2, Casero at 1min 10sec; 3, Lasntzbarrutia 1.24; 4, F Escartin (Sp) Kelme 1.45; 5, Zarrabeitia 1.47; 6, Voskamp 1.48.

Motor Racing

INDYCAR GI JOE'S 200 (Portland, Oregon): 1, M Blundell (Eng) Reynard-Mercedes; 2, G de Ferran (Bri) Reynard-Honda; 3, R Boesel (Bri) Reynard-Ford; 4, C Fittipaldi (Br) Swift-Ford; 5, G Moore (Can) Reynard-Mercedes; 6, M Gugelmin (Br) Reynard-Mercedes; 7, P Tracy (Can) Penske-Mercedes; 8, M Andretti (US) Swift-Ford; 9, P Johnstone (US) Reynard-Honda; 10, A Fernandez (Mex) Lola-Honda. **Also:** 26, D Franchitti (Scot) Reynard-Mercedes.

Evening Racing

WINDSOR

6.40 (1m 2f 7yds): 1, SEATTLE SWING, L Dettori (100–30 Jt Fav); **2, Top Jem** (100–30 Jt Fav); **3, Misty Rain** (12–1). 8 ran. 1¾, 4. (J Gosden) Tote: £3.50; £1.40, £1.90, £3.10. Dual F: £6.00. Trio: £36.10. CSF: £13.23. Tricast: £106.05. NR: My Beloved.

7.10 (5f 217yds): 1, WILLOW DALE, T Quinn (6–1 Jt Fav); **2, Never Think Twice** (8–1); **3, Sizzling** (14–1). 6–1 Jt Fav Fauna Alone. 14 ran. 5, 2. (D Elsworth) Tote: £5.80; £2.10, £2.50, £5.70. Dual F: £25.90. Trio: £138.90. CSF: £47.52. Tricast: £594.49.

7.40 (1m 2f 7yds): 1, BINT BALADEE, L Dettori (9–4); **2, Mandilak** (5–4 Fav); **3, Darcey** (9–1). 5 ran. 1, ¾. (Saeed bin Suroor) Tote: £2.70; £1.50, £1.50. Dual F: £2.30. CSF: £4.86. NR: Captain Horatius.

8.10 (5f 217yds): 1, BEN RINNES, A Daly (50–1); **2, Merlin's Ring** (20–1); **3, Da Boss** (8–1). 7–1 Fav First Dance. 20 ran. 2½, ¾. (R Johnson Houghton) Tote: £97.40; £19.30, £9.10, £3.50. Dual F: £2,409.20. CSF: £831.00.

YARMOUTH

6.25 (1m 3yds): 1, ALIFANDANGO, M Roberts (12–1); **2, Bint Shihama** (13–8 Fav); **3, Cordate** (3–1). 9 ran. Hd, 1½. (A Stewart) Tote: £14.90; £2.40, £1.20, £2.20. Dual F: £17.90. Trio: £14.20. CSF: £29.79.

6.55 (6f 3yds): 1, SEA-DEER, R Cochrane (4–5 Fav); **2, Sharpest** (10–1); **3, Paddy Lad** (4–1). 4 ran. 1½, ¾. (C Dwyer) Tote: £1.90. Dual F: £5.10. CSF: £8.09.

7.25 (5f 43yds): 1, CATHERINES SONG, D Holland (2–1 Jt Fav); **2, Ivory's Joy** (4–1); **3, Fast Franc** (2–1 Jt Fav). 6 ran. 2, 3. (C Dwyer) Tote: £2.90; £1.80, £1.90. Dual F: £9.60. CSF: £9.94.

Fixtures

Rugby Union

TOUR MATCH: Free State v British Lions (6.15, Bloemfontein)

Cricket

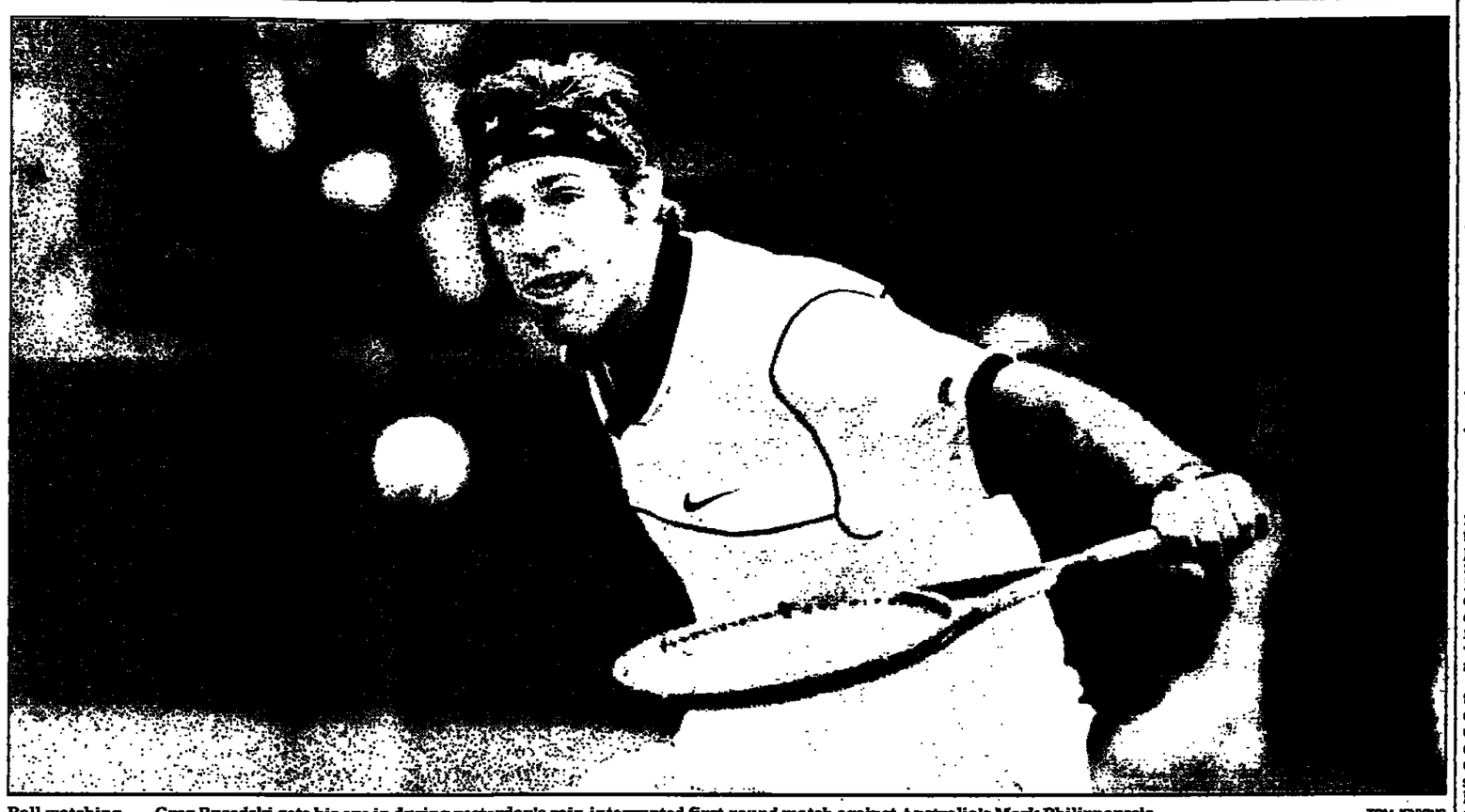
NATWEST TROPHY: First round (10.30, one day). **Beaconsfield:** Buckinghamshire v Essex. **Wisbech:** Cambridgeshire v Hampshire. **Barrow:** Cumberland v Northamptonshire. **Exmouth:** Devon v Leicestershire. **Cardiff:** Glamorgan v Bedfordshire. **Bristol:** Gloucestershire v Scotland. **Old Trafford:** Lancashire v Berkshire. **Lincoln Lindum:** Lincolnshire v Derbyshire. **Lord's:** Middlesex v Kent. **Trent Bridge:** Nottinghamshire v Staffordshire. **Taunton:** Somerset v Herefordshire. **The Oval:** Surrey v Durham. **Hove:** Sussex v Shropshire. **Edgbaston:** Warwickshire v Norfolk. **Worcester:** Worcestershire v Holland. **Headingley:** Yorkshire v Ireland.

AON RISK TROPHY (11.0, one day): **Fennefield CC:** Nottinghamshire v Yorkshire. **Haywards Heath:** Sussex v MCC Young Cricketers.

CRICKET: England's batsmen hang on to make the Lord's Test match safe, page 14

SportsGuardian

Wimbledon: Day One



Ball watching . . . Greg Rusedski gets his eye in during yesterday's rain-interrupted first-round match against Australia's Mark Philippoussis TOM JENKINS

Power amid the showers

Stephen Bierley sees Tim Henman strike form in the rain and Britain's No.2 Greg Rusedski two sets up and serving at 138mph

ON a deeply frustrating start to the Wimbledon championships, which saw the British weather at its infuriating worst with persistent showers fracturing rhythm and tempo, Britain's No. 1 Tim Henman managed to skip around the rain to win his first-round match against Canada's Daniel Nestor 7–6, 6–1, 6–4.

But Greg Rusedski was stopped in his impressive tracks against the No. 7 seed Mark Philippoussis of Australia, leading by two sets to love and 3–1 when fading light brought a halt to play on Centre Court.

Rusedski, arriving at Wimbledon on the back of his victory in the Nottingham Open, served brilliantly and immediately put Philippoussis, the winner at Queen's, under colossal pressure. Indeed the Australian struggled initially to hold on to his own serve, the fastest recorded in the world, and lost the first tie-break 8–6, even though Rusedski double-faulted on the first set point.

Both players recorded serves of 138mph, the fastest on Centre Court since such timings were first taken in 1992. It continued to be a service-dominated match but once again Rusedski's nerve held better in the second tie-break which he also won 8–6 after being 6–2 down.

When the match was suspended at 8.50pm Rusedski had just broken the Philippoussis serve for the first time. Clearly he did not want to go off but the court was slippery and the light poor.

Henman's start was uncertain and he had to save three set points in the tie-break, which he won 13–11. But thereafter he controlled the match easily enough. "Since the operation I've been struggling to find my form and I was obviously a bit nervous," he said. "A first-round match anywhere can be difficult, never mind Wimbledon."

This was only his 11th match, and his sixth win, since he entered hospital in March to have pieces of floating bone removed from the right elbow. After losing early on at the Italian Open, his comeback tournament, and at the French Open Henman understandably lost a good deal of the confidence which had been so high after he won his first ATP tournament in Sydney at the beginning of the year.

He always thought that the return to grass would lift his game, although he won only one match at Queen's. Last week's Nottingham tournament was also badly affected by rain; Henman reached the semi-finals but his last two matches were switched indoors, hardly ideal preparation for Wimbledon.

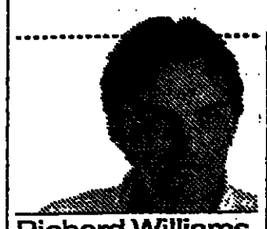
Henman's match was the first on the new No. 1 Court, which was opened with a parade of former champions including Rod Laver, Billie Jean King, John McEnroe, Margaret Court and Boris Becker. Unfortunately by the time Henman and Nestor were knocking up the rain came down.

Richard Krajicek, the reigning Wimbledon champion, opened up play on the Centre Court with a relatively straightforward victory over Germany's Marcello Craca while Spain's Carlos Moya, beaten by Pete Sampras in the Australian Open final in January, won his first-ever match at Wimbledon. The Spanish have six players in the world's top 20 but only Moya among them is playing at Wimbledon.

Britain's No. 5 Andrew Richardson defeated Sergi Duran of Spain and afterwards said Henman's success had been instrumental in his recent progress. "It's easier having someone up there showing it can be done."

Henman's victory, page 15

Christie the clashing symbol



Richard Williams

FOR THE British, these are confusing times. Are we good at sport or not? And if so, does that make us good people? If we fail, what then? The more prominent sport becomes in national life, the more tempting it becomes to use success or failure as an indicator of collective worth. This summer, however, you might as well try and catch lightning in a bottle.

Examine the contradictions. One minute the England cricket team are world-beaters; the next they hardly know one end of the bat from the other. Our rugbymen, constantly told that the southern hemisphere teams belong on another planet, head South and beat the reigning world champions on the Springboks' own terms, by unremitting physical intensity and a disciplined refusal to make mistakes. Our footballers lose badly at home to Italy, win well in Poland, and come top of a mini-tournament in which they take revenge over Italy yet lose in the final game to Brazil, who seem to have come from another planet . . .

Never mind the fortunes of the nation as a whole. None of the foregoing even provides the vaguest suggestion of what might happen in these particular teams' next matches. England could still win or lose the Ashes. The Lions could be mauled by the Boks on Saturday. The football team remain capable of anything from catastrophe to heroism.

And so it goes on, this unfolding summer series of overlapping psychodramas in which we choose to trace our collective path to national redemption or perdition.

Look at the Great Britain athletics team, who gathered themselves together after the stunning collective failure of Atlanta, rose above the nasty squabbles besetting their disastrous bureaucracy, and delivered a phenomenal result at the European Cup meeting in Munich last weekend.

To suggest that Linford Christie has his critics would be to restate the obvious. But his performance in leading the men's team to victory was beyond reproach.

In the spotlight, Christie is not an easy character. Nor were, or are, Ian Botham, Will Carling, Paul Gascoigne, Steve Redgrave, Mike Atherton, Damon Hill, and many other British sporting heroes of the past two decades. We might ask ourselves the reason for that. Their successors obviously have, with the result that we are surrounded by a new generation of heroes processed by intensive media coaching aimed at turning them all into bland, telegenic clones of Gary Lineker, in order to give them self-protection and the prospect of a talking-head career once the legs can no longer do the work.

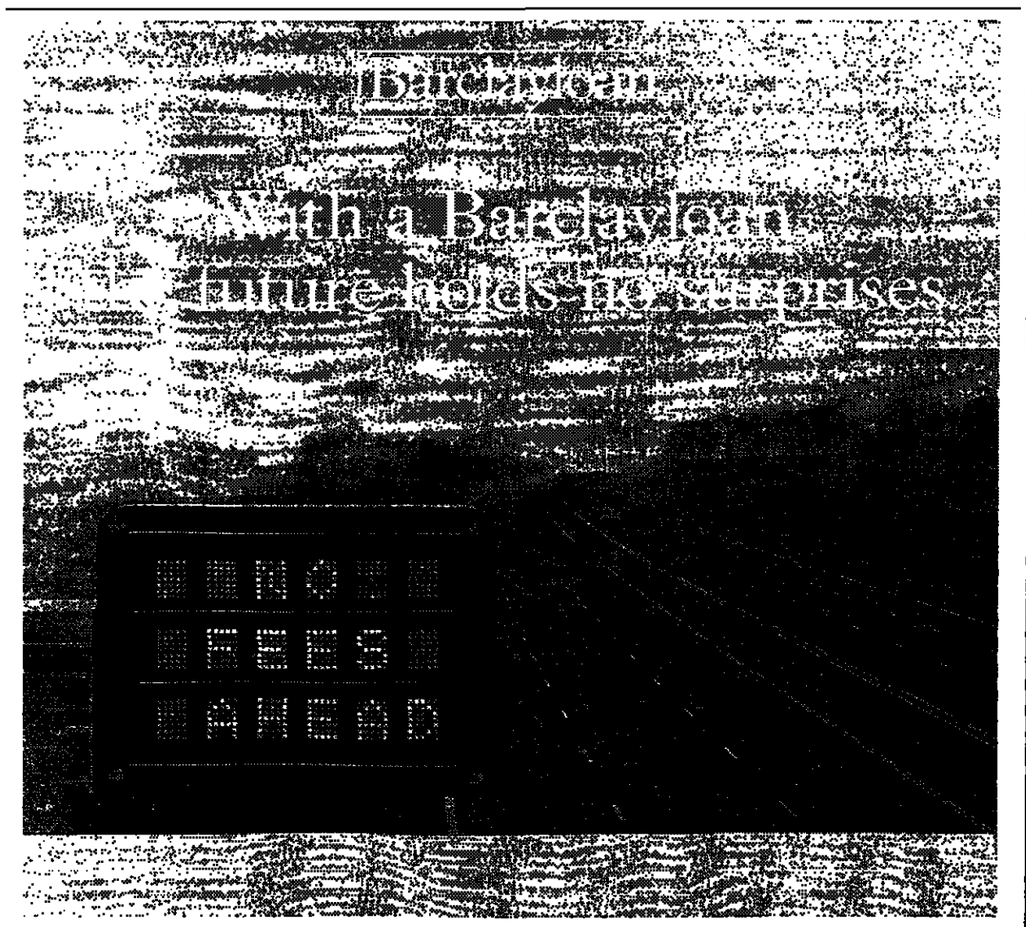
Perhaps one day we shall wake up and realise how much we miss the awkward old buggers such as Christie, whose suspicions and resentments were constantly on display, yet who was steadfast in declaring his pride at representing his nation.

Has he really gone? Brendan Foster tried to get him to tell the television audience that he had changed his mind about retirement. "This isn't a 'definite maybe'," Christie said. "This is it." He was talking about wearing the British vest for the last time. But if he is running fast enough to mount a realistic challenge in the world championships in Athens, then why on earth shouldn't he? And hasn't he earned the right to make the decision in his own good time?

I admire Eric Cantona for concluding his playing career at 31, before the signs of decline had become seriously apparent, ensuring that he will forever be remembered at his peak. That takes guts and clarity of purpose. But I admire Christie more for loving his sport so much that he can't bear to stop as long as the stopwatch tells him to go on.

YES, he likes the money. Running is his job, after all. If he were a barrister or a waiter, no one would be pestering him to retire at 37. You only had to look at his face on Sunday afternoon, surrounded by the members of his British team, to see a deeper motivation.

Perhaps sport does say something about the national character, after all. In the wake of his world championship victory in Stuttgart four years ago I wrote that the course of Christie's career after he finished competing would say less about him than it said about us. In Munich his deeds endorsed the view of those who believe he represents a national resource whose greatest contribution — as a symbol of achievement, as an encouragement to others — lies ahead.



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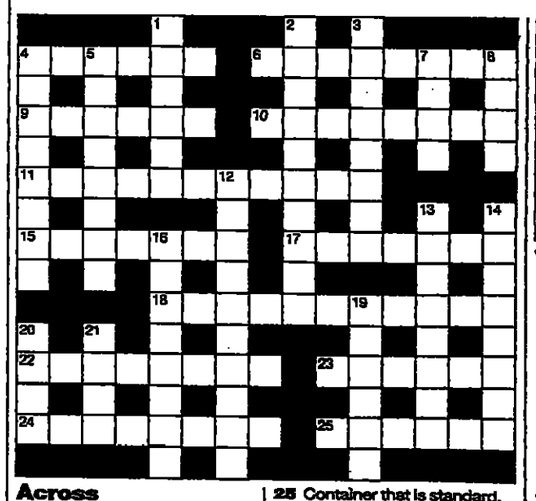
How come they didn't wind up as coke-addled wrecks? "We never really left the Black Country ethic. We'd had six number one records and we were still going back to the same old pubs." Slade — credible at last

G2 p8

Guardian Crossword No 20,998

Set by Janus

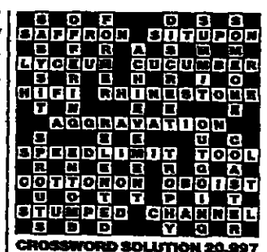


Across

4 Party chief's territory (6)
6 Faults to do with receivers (8)
9 Boy getting over ten for poem (6)
10 Old Italian in wild canter round America (8)
11 Compromise on musical adaptation (11)
15 Bird-house in river-bed (7)
17 Where answer is to follow role-model (7)
18 Horse for Miss Senegal? (5,6)
22 Is unhappy about the lady's fruit (8)
23 American deer (it has one paw reversed) (6)
24 Wrecker's crafty ruse to encompass boat's destruction (8)
25 Container that is standard, with no variation (6)

Down

1 Soldier outdone by Bible man (6)
2 Extricated from dilemma near the Dutch coast (3,3,4)
3 Refutation of a person ridiculed in Lear? (8)
4 Breaks up underworld rings (8)
5 Tree found in island wood (8)
7 Shrub uprooted by some peacocks (4)
8 Audible indication of mathematical function (4)
12 Additional one thrown over us is not essential (10)
13 Fertilising football team arena (8)
14 Says perhaps rain must fall on Sennacherib for example (8)
16 They entertain diners by putting nude in show (8)
19 Make it feasible to measure irregular bale (6)
20 Performs by the book (4)
21 Some may grow it in another border (4)



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